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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE SMALL RURAL COMMUNITY:
THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

by



BEVIS FRANKLIN PETERS

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
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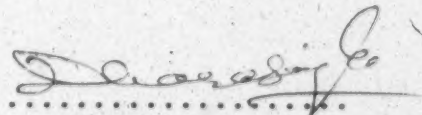
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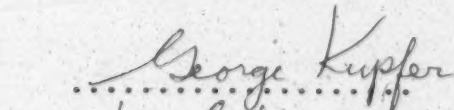
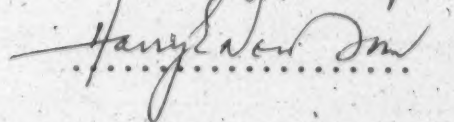
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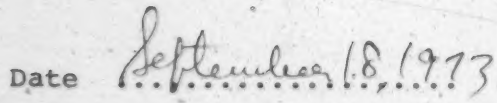
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Community Development in the Small Rural Community: The Role of the Public Library" submitted by Bevis Peters in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.


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ABSTRACT

A major concern of researchers in the field of community development has been the extent to which agencies and organizations can promote the process of community development in rural communities. Many of the studies show that, in the small rural community, a need exists for the development and support of local institutions which can effectively facilitate the community development process. This study seeks to explore the possibility of the public library's fulfilling this role.

The general conclusion reached is that a public library, which is established and organized on the principles of community development and modern public librarianship, can make a major contribution to the community development process. Because of the flexibility in its organizational and administrative structure, its methods and strategies used, its overall purposes, the public library has the potential for being the primary resource centre in the small rural community. It is suggested, therefore, that community and library leaders, and all levels of government, should make an effort to promote the public library as the Community Resource Centre for the purpose of meeting the information and

learning needs of individuals and groups in the small rural community. A model of such a Centre is presented, with suggestions for its implementation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the most critical challenges presently facing governments of countries the world over, regardless of their stage of development, concerns their continuous search for new strategies through which they can effectively promote involvement of the small rural community in their national development effort. It has been well documented that, in relation to their urban counterparts, rural communities are often at a disadvantage socially, economically, and politically. This has been generally the case in developing and developed countries alike. The North American rural community "has been despised, neglected, exploited and robbed," as one writer puts it.¹ Subsistence economy, low standards of social amenities, lack of information on the resources and services available within the community, these have been some of the phrases most often used to describe general problems of rural life. Richard Poston, whose studies have taken him to a number of rural communi-

¹ Arthur E. Morgan, The Small Community (New York: Harper, 1942), p. 3.

ties in the developing countries, perceives the general problem to be the lack of real opportunities. "There is," he writes, "no adequate social or political machinery through which the people may band together to study, to learn, to plan, to work, to form decisions, or to take action to improve their life situation."²

Experience through the years, however, has made it increasingly clear that goals of national development will hardly be realized unless the small rural community is provided with the opportunities to assume greater responsibilities and to become actively involved in the process of planned change. It was in response to this need for increased rural involvement that national and local governments, community groups and organizations have embarked on a movement of community development - a planned systematic approach towards the improvement of all aspects of community life.

There are, of course, other reasons why it is necessary to increase rural participation in development efforts on a national scale. On the basis of sheer numbers, rural communities have played, and will continue to play, an important role in the economic, social and political development of any country. This numerical

²Richard W. Poston, Democracy Speaks Many Tongues (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 30.

importance is manifested in the fact that over two-thirds of the world population is rural. In the developing countries, over 80 percent of the total population live in rural communities. Although in developed countries, the proportion is not as high, the percentage of the total population living in rural areas, is significant. In Canada and in the United States, for example, over 30 percent of the total population is considered to be rural.³ In addition to the demographic factor, the importance of rural communities to the economy of any country can scarcely be ignored. All countries, be they industrialized or not, look to their rural population for the human resources needed in the manufacturing sector of the economy. It is also the rural population which is called upon to provide the agricultural products required to feed the mounting urban population. Similarly, it is the rural population upon which government depends for the development of the agricultural sector.

Since 1952, when the first community development program at the national level was launched in India, this approach to development has been, as Dunham observes, "one of the most important and exciting international

³T. Lynn Smith and Paul E. Zopf, Jr. Principles of Inductive Rural Sociology (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1970), pp. 42-5.

4

phenomena of our time."⁴ Commenting on the general acceptance of the "idea," its philosophy and practical implications, Dunham writes:

In some countries it has helped to awaken national leaders to the importance of rural development and social planning. Certain concepts, "principles," and guidelines have emerged, granted, these are often not well understood, and they are sometimes taken too literally and tend to become static creeds instead of dynamic guides.⁵

Given the relative newness of this approach to rural development, it becomes obvious, as Dunham points out, that many of the concepts, strategies and techniques, will have to be modified, or even discarded, in accordance with the dictates of a particular community. New strategies, new approaches will have to be developed and tested. In addition, there must be willingness and commitment on the part of government at all levels, community organizations and groups, to encourage and promote innovations even when it may necessitate radical changes in organizational structure and administrative behaviour. It is in this light that the writer will make recommendations and suggestions regarding the role and function of the public library in the small rural community embarking on a program

⁴Arthur Dunham, "Community Development - Whither Bound?", Community Development Journal, V, No. 2 (April, 1970), 85.

⁵Ibid.

of planned comprehensive development.

A. Nature and Significance of the Problem

Community development deals with those aspects of the community which are subject to change, as well as the institutions and systems through which change may be effected. Findings based on action-research indicate certain vital elements necessary to the enhancement of the community development process. These, among others, are: the development of latent potentialities in the community; a knowledgeable and informed community; opportunities for continuous adult education; increased channels of communication; cooperation and coordination among the various agencies and organizations at the community level. In order to meet these challenges, to provide the above requirements and learning opportunities demanded of the community development process, strong institutional leadership within the community becomes essential. It is the writer's contention that the public library has the potential for assuming this role particularly with reference to the knowledge and information input in the small rural community.

This thesis limits itself, therefore, to the consideration of one major problem: the potential role of the public library in relation to certain aspects of community development. To state the problem more specifi-

cally, how can the public library, in the small rural community, through programs, materials, facilities and personnel, contribute to:

- 1) developing awareness and motivation of community members;
- 2) helping community members to become more informed;
- 3) increasing channels of communication;
- 4) providing the adult members of the community with opportunities for their continuous education;
- 5) coordinating the efforts of various groups and organizations at the community level?

B. Significance of the Problem

The success of community development depends, to a large extent, on the active and enthusiastic response of the community. Effective community development requires that community members be well informed if they are to make intelligent choices among the available alternatives. Education, motivation and communication are all vital to the community development process. It is also imperative that the efforts of individuals and groups in the community be coordinated. Accordingly, in the small rural community where the resources and institutions for facilitating these

processes are limited, it is necessary to develop various alternative strategies, and to promote those administrative and organizational structures which will meet these needs.

In addition to the above prerequisites, and depending on the particular characteristics of the community concerned, those responsible for inducing change must arrive at decisions regarding the allocation of limited resources, the key workers, the kinds of programs and the approaches to be used. In a report published by the United Nations Regional and Community Development Section, the implications of these factors are discussed:

*As an agent for inducing change, community development has to give close attention to the strategy and tactics it considers using and the time needed to realize its goals. A strategy for village reform, for example, has to consider whether it would be more effective to bring community development workers from the outside or to use indigenous workers; in allocating resources, community planners have to decide whether to deal with a wide range of community problems simultaneously (the comprehensive approach) or to adopt a selective approach by tackling one or a few problems at a time ... In developing programmes for local development practitioners would do well to organize a systematic body of data on which to base informed judgements.*⁶

Inherent in these alternative suggestions is the need for

⁶ Regional and Community Development Section, United Nations, "Methods of Community Development," Community Development Journal, VI, No. 3 (Autumn, 1971), 148-55.

a flexible administrative system through which planned change may be promoted. In addition, the institution must be equipped to meet the information and learning needs which are important to the community development process.

It is in these areas that the public library can well fulfill an important role in the small rural community. As one traces the historical development of the public library, perhaps the most outstanding characteristic that emerges is its "built-in" flexibility, particularly with regard to the nature of the services this agency provides. Moreover, the developments and trends reported to be taking place in modern public libraries, that is, in the English-speaking world, some European countries, and certain parts of the developing countries - are other factors which add significance to the study of the public library as a potential agent of change in the community development process. Of equal significance is the fact that the public library has contributed to community development. As Lacy asserts, libraries will increasingly play an active and dynamic role in community life:

As our society becomes increasingly information based, as the mastery of complex bodies of information becomes more essential to every aspect of management, and indeed to individuals functioning within the society, the library will become a more essential operating component of society. From an institution with rather general

educational and recreational aims functioning - however worthy - somewhat in the margins of our central concerns, the library will increasingly become a part of our essential machinery for dealing with those concerns.⁷

Recognition of the potential of the public library as an institution of change is, of course, not new. The United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) of 1949 strongly recommends the optimum utilization of the public library in the promotion of national development.⁸ At the UNESCO Sao Paulo conference, the four broad objectives of library service were stated as follows:

- 1) To provide the public with information, books, materials and facilities best meeting their interests and intellectual requirements;
- 2) To stimulate freedom of expression and constructive critical attitude towards current social problems;
- 3) To educate men to participate creatively in community life and to promote better understanding between individuals, groups and nations;

⁷ Dan Lacy, "Social Change and the Library: 1945-1980", in D. Knight and Shepley Nourse, eds., Libraries at Large (New York: Bowker, 1969), pp. 20-1.

⁸ United Nations, Access to Books: UNESCO and its Programme (Paris: UNESCO, 1952), p. 7.

- 4) To supplement the activities of learning, offering new educational possibilities to the people.⁹

So similar are the broad objectives of the public library to those of the community development process, that it seems possible to interchange the names with only minor alterations in the purposes and scope. There is, however, an important factor that may hinder the promotion of public libraries. This concerns popular misconceptions regarding public libraries. A UNESCO recommendation with respect to this states that,

No amount of verbal description will clear away this ignorance: people must be given a chance to see a library at work, to take part in its activities...¹⁰

A similar recommendation is made by Jean Hassenforder, who, in this case, has in mind the community decision makers and government leaders:

Whatever form the development process may take, there is one essential condition: the national leadership, the political and administrative authorities, must be won over to the cause of public libraries and must understand the usefulness and the need for them.¹¹

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

¹¹ Jean Hassenforder, "Comparative Studies and the Development of Public Libraries," UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries, XXII, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb., 1968), 13-18.

Many of the recommendations as set out by UNESCO and other leaders in the field of public libraries have been put into practice in developing countries. Presently, these countries are realizing many of the benefits of the public library movement. For example, in India, the functions of public libraries are perceived to be educational, informational, political, economic, industrial, cultural and antiquarian."¹² In his discussion of the Indian experience, an Indian scholar, Viswanathan, writes:

*The public library is capable of extending its services and usefulness to all groups and shades of opinion in the community, irrespective of age, religion, profession, sex, political conviction and economic level. No other social institution can perform such a wide range of service to the entire population of an area. The public library's definition as a centre of communal study, an information bureau, a continuation school, a training school for democracy, goes to show how far reaching is its influence in moulding the life of the community.*¹³

On a more philosophical level, Andre Maurois sees the public library as the only means by which man can truly broaden his horizons, thus making himself a more valuable member of society:

¹² S. R. Ranganathan, Library Manual (Bombay: Asia Pub. House, 1960), p. 21.

¹³ C. G. Viswanathan, An Introduction to Public Library Organization (Bombay: Asia Pub. House, 1961), p.4.

Nothing is more important for man and than to bring within the reach of all these means of broadening our horizons, escaping from ourselves and making discoveries which literally transform life and make the individual a more valuable member of society. And the only way to do this is through public libraries. ¹⁴

C. Purpose of the Study.

The main purpose of this thesis is to investigate the nature of the public library in the small rural community, and the extent to which it can and should commit its resources to the community development process. To be considered are: (1) trends in modern public librarianship, ¹⁵ and (2) their application to certain important elements of community development. Specifically, this study will focus on the role of the library, as mentioned earlier, in relation to (1) information and communication in the community development process, (2) adult education and (3) community decision-making.

D. Research Procedure

This study is the outgrowth of the writer's interest in the information and knowledge aspects of rural

¹⁴Andre Maurois, "Public Libraries and their Mission," UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries, XV, No. 4 (July-August, 1961), 169-70.

¹⁵Regarding the use of this term, see operational definitions at the end of this chapter.

development, his studies in this area, and his experiences as a field coordinator of a rural libraries survey, during the summer of 1973, in the Province of Alberta.

It was the original intention of the writer to examine, for the purpose of comparison, major sources of information and knowledge available to selected rural communities in Alberta, and to develop a number of hypotheses regarding effective means of transmitting such knowledge and information. However, while researching the literature for the study, the writer came to recognize that there is a significant gap in research about public libraries in general and their role as institutions of change in community development. On further discussion with resource persons, professional librarians and rural community leaders, the writer decided that a study exploring possibilities for the effective role of the public library in community development might prove useful in filling the research gap. Hitherto, the major part of the contribution of the public library to the community development effort has tended to go unnoticed in the literature in this field. In spite of the numerous articles¹⁶ dealing with the roles and functions of agen-

¹⁶ Agency for International Development, Community Development Abstracts (New York, 1964 and 1970).

cies and institutions through which planned social change may be effected, little mention is made of the role of the public library and its potential for institutional leadership in Community Development.

E. Nature and Scope of the Study

The nature of this study is both exploratory and descriptive. It is the aim of the writer to first explore concepts, principles and preliminary data from the various related disciplines and areas of study; that is, Community Development, Library Science, Rural Sociology, Adult Education, and others - and then to present suggestions and recommendations regarding the role and functions of the small rural library in the community development process. This study is, therefore, not limited to the above mentioned Alberta rural libraries, nor to any specific rural community. It does not depend on the use of empirical data mainly because of its exploratory nature. The major sources of information are books, periodicals, journals, microfilm, resource persons, etc.

The scope of the study is limited for the following reasons: (1) it does not rely on empirical data; (2) Community Development and Library Science are relatively new fields of study and, therefore, the research in this area is limited; (3) the writer is relying

primarily on two separate fields - Community Development and Library Science - surveying the research and attempting to analyze and synthesize the data in order to formulate recommendations and suggestions. Such an approach, therefore, makes for the possibility of gaps in the study.

Throughout this thesis, the following conception of public library, as stated in the UNESCO Manifesto of 1949, will be adhered to:

A public library is a democratic institution, operated by the people, for the people, and for the free use on equal terms of all members of the community, regardless of occupation, creed, class, or race. It must not tell people what to think, but help them decide what to think about; it must offer children, young people, men and women, opportunity and encouragement to educate themselves continuously to keep abreast of progress in all fields of knowledge, to maintain freedom of expression, and a constructively critical attitude toward all public issues. It must help them to be better social and political citizens of their country and of the world, to be more efficient in their day-to-day activities, to develop their creative capacities and powers of appreciation in arts and letters, to assist the advancement of knowledge, to use their leisure time to promote personal happiness and social well-being. ¹⁷

F. Overview of the Thesis

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter

¹⁷United Nations, Access to Books, pp. 4-5.

II provides a brief historical overview of the development of the public libraries in selected countries and an examination of the roles and functions of public libraries in response to major sources of social change. Finally, trends in public librarianship in the United States are outlined. Chapter III examines four elements of the community development process - information, communication, adult education and community decision-making, and recommendations regarding the role of the public library in relation to these elements are formulated. In Chapter IV, a schema is presented suggesting possible learning situations and strategies to facilitate the learning process in community development. A model of the small public library as the primary resource centre in the rural community is developed with suggestions for its implementation. The study ends with a summary and concluding statement.

G. Operational Definitions¹⁸

Central Library: The American Library Association defines this as "the administrative centre of a library system, where the principal collections are kept and handled." The basic idea is to have a centralized organization of materials and decentralized services provided by the units which make

¹⁸All definitions pertaining to libraries are taken from: American Library Association, Statistics Coordinating Project: A Handbook of Concepts, Definitions and Terminology (Chicago: American Library Association, 1966), pp. 127-45.

up the system.

Change Agent: Defined by Rodgers and Burdge as "a professional who influences innovation - decisions in a direction deemed desirable by a change agency."¹⁹ This definition is modified to include any professional or voluntary worker who has some influence on the decisions made by his agency and by the community in which he works.

Community Decision-making: Rogers and Burdge define this as a "process by which a community chooses a plan or idea that affects the community and puts this idea into action."²⁰ Five stages are involved in this process - stimulation, initiation, legitimization, decision and action.

Community Development Process: In endeavouring to attain the broad objectives of community development, the following are essential to the process: 1) the purposeful creation of learning situations; 2) the development of techniques for increasing individual and community awareness and confidence; 3) the encouragement of meaningful involvement in community activities. The key words in this definition are education, motivation and participation.

¹⁹ Everett M. Rogers and R. Burdge, Social Change in Rural Societies (2nd ed.; New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1969), p. 436.

²⁰ Ibid.

Community Services: Defined by the American Library Association as "special services provided by a library for the community as a whole or for some segment of the community."²¹ These services go beyond the basic services made available to the community by public libraries.

Continuous Adult Education: The concept of lifelong education involving deliberate planning with the educational needs of the adult community in mind. It is a process by which men and women, either alone or in groups, try to improve their knowledge, skills, or sensitivities, or the process by which individuals and institutions attempt to change people in these ways.²²

Cooperation: Defined by Rogers and Burdge as "agreed-upon action directed towards similar goals."²³

Cooperative Library System: "A group of independent and autonomous libraries banded together by informal or formal agreements or contracts which stipulate the common services to be planned and coordinated by the directors of the cooperative system."²⁴

²¹A. L. A., Handbook of Concepts, p.127-45.

²²J. P. Leagans, H. Copeland and G. E. Kaiser, Selected Concepts from Educational Psychology and Adult Education for Extension and Continuing Educators (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1971), p. 76.

²³Rogers and Burdge, Social Change in Rural Societies, p. 435-41.

²⁴A. L. A., Handbook of Concepts, p. 127-45.

Coordination: A conscious effort on the part of agencies and groups in the community to regulate and integrate their efforts into harmonious action.

Library: "An organized collection of published and other materials with a staff trained to provide and interpret such materials as required to meet the informational, educational and/or recreational needs of a clientele, also its physical facilities."²⁵

Public Library: "A library that serves free all residents of a given community, district, or region and receives its financial support, in whole or in part, from public funds."²⁶

Library Resources: "The total accumulation of all library materials provided by a library for its clientele."²⁷ These include books, pamphlets, film, microfilm, pictures, phonograph records, cassette recordings, etc.

Library System: "An organization based on a plan or procedure in which library units work together, sharing services and resources in a manner which results in improved services."²⁸

²⁵ A. L. A., Handbook of Concepts, p. 127-145.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

Modern Public Librarianship: An extended conception of public library service in which the general trend is towards the development of library systems, placing less emphasis on the conservation of materials and giving more attention to the needs of the patrons, and utilization of multi-media. In addition, the librarian is educated to consider the library as a primary agency of social change.

Readers' Advisory Service: Defined by the American Library Association as "consultation provided for reading problems of adults, recommendations of books and a reading program, and/or instruction in the use of the library and its resources by adults."²⁹ In addition, all forms of media are utilized for the purposes of information, education, and recreation. The emphasis is placed on viewing and listening.

Reference Service: "A library's activity in seeking to locate and supply specific information requested by library users."³⁰

Small Rural Community: A town, village or hamlet with a population cluster of not more than 3,500.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE - RESPONSES TO SOCIAL CHANGE

The main purposes of this Chapter are: (1) to present an historical overview of the development of the modern public library in Britain, the United States, and Canada; (2) to discuss some of the major social forces which have influenced the changing roles and functions of the public library; and (3) to examine general public library trends in North America.

For the purposes of this study, the definition of public library is restricted to a "library that serves free all residents of a given community, district, or region, and receives its financial support, in whole or in part from public funds."¹ The essential difference between a public library and all other libraries is that the public

¹As already indicated under Operational Definitions in Chapter I, this definition is modified to exclude libraries which are privately controlled, even though they may provide without charge library services to a community. American Library Association, Statistics Coordinating Project: A Handbook of Concepts, Definitions and Terminology (Chicago: A. L. A., 1966), pp. 127-45.

library is a free, tax supported institution. It is with this distinction in mind that the public library may be considered a development of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.²

Before discussing the development of the public library which had its beginnings in Europe and North America, brief mention must be made of the "social" and "popular" libraries which were in existence prior to the establishment of the public libraries. As early as the fifteenth century, there existed in Britain what were known as the "endowed" libraries. These appeared first in the towns, and were later established in rural areas near the end of the seventeenth century. Although they were founded and financially supported by private national societies, their services were available to the public. A second type of library was established in Britain during the sixteenth century; this was the "Old Town Library." Such a library was controlled by the municipalities and was intended for public use. Generally, the services provided fell short in meeting the needs of the community. Commenting on the general level of services provided by libraries during that period, Elmer Johnson writes that these libraries were "usually poorly housed (although a

²Elmer D. Johnson, History of Libraries in the Western World (2nd ed., New Jersey: Metuchen, 1970), p. 218.

few of them were in architecturally elegant surroundings) and had inexperienced or uninterested "library keepers" rather than librarians in charge of them. Hours of opening were few and the contents were of such a scholarly nature that few people used them."³

The "parochial" library and the "village" library appeared both in Britain and the United States during the eighteenth century. In the case of the parochial libraries, lending services were made available to members of the clergy and laymen, although, as Johnson points out, they were largely used by the clergy.⁴ Financial support for these libraries took the form of local gifts and contributions from a number of voluntary organizations. These libraries were soon to disappear in the United States, mainly because of the declining interest on the part of the general public and of insufficient funds. The "village" libraries, which were also established in Scotland about this same time, had much greater success. One of the major reasons suggested for such success was the manner in which these libraries were organized. Johnson records that during this period four such libraries were established, each having a different stock of books. After a two-year inter-

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 224.

val, the complete stock would be exchanged among the participating libraries.⁵

With the emergence of the adult education movement in Britain and the United States during the eighteenth century, a number of proprietary or subscription libraries were established. Financial support for them came mainly from fees paid by subscribers or members. Circulating privileges were restricted to members, although in the United States, non-members were allowed free use of the materials but only in the place where such materials were housed. The increasing demand for library service during this period was such that in Britain, for example, the libraries of the Mechanics Institute found it necessary to increase their reference materials, make provisions for separate reading rooms, and to begin to employ librarians.⁶

In Canada, until the middle of the nineteenth century, public library service of the types described above was virtually non-existent. During the 1830's a number of "social libraries" and libraries of the Mechanics Institute, patterned after similar libraries in Britain and the United States, were established. In addition to these,

⁵ Ibid., p. 226.

⁶ Ibid., p. 233.

there were small religious collections and a few boxes of books provided by the traders at Canada's outposts. Beginning around 1846, a new type of library service began to appear in Ontario and other parts of Eastern Canada. This was the "school-district library" operated by the schools, but also providing services for the general public. These libraries, which were established prior to the public library movement in Canada, were "far from providing anything like public library service," as Johnson points out. He goes on to state:

They did form a beginning by acquainting a few users with worthwhile reading material, and in their public support they set the precedent for both public and school libraries of the future.⁷

According to the accounts provided on the history of the public library in the developing countries, there seems to be no established pattern in public library services during this period, prior to the public library movement. With the exception of a few countries, India for example, very little was happening in terms of public library services. In India, a number of subscription libraries were set up in the larger cities; that is, in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. For the rest of the Third World, however, it was not until the end of the nineteenth

⁷Ibid., p. 455.

century that a number of voluntary associations began to organize, and financially support, a type of semi-public library service.

A. Major Public Library Developments in Selected Countries

a) Britain

It was to mark the beginning of the modern public library movement in Britain when, in 1847, the British parliament appointed a Committee on Public Libraries to carry out a study and to make recommendations regarding the establishment of public libraries throughout the country. Following the report to the Committee, the Public Librarians Act of 1850 was passed, granting to cities of a population of 10,000 or more, the right to levy taxes for public library support. Subsequent legislation and the Public Library Act of 1892 resulted in the provision of public library services in every urban and rural district in England, Scotland and Ireland. Alfred Hessel's account of this period points to some of the factors which had an impact on the development of public libraries at this time. He writes:

The Library Act of 1850 was permissive: it still left the founding of libraries to local initiative. A few cities were quick to take advantage of the act and, as the years passed, more and more cities

were added to their number. Yet, on the whole, progress was slow. Extension of school legislation in the seventies caused a quickening of tempo, as did the founding of the Library Association in 1877.⁸

A significant piece of legislation was passed in the early 1900's which was to further promote public library development. This was the Public Libraries Act of 1919. In the Act, measures were taken to remove previous limitations on tax rates, thereby increasing financial support for libraries. The Act also paved the way for the creation of library control at the local county level. In the meantime, and following the Act, demands on public library service continued to increase.

During the period of the depression and World War II, the funding of libraries was drastically curtailed. Public libraries could no longer provide the services desired by the public. This lasted until the early 1960's. In 1964, however, the Public Libraries and Museums Act was passed. Since then, the public library has rapidly progressed. Public library service has been made available to the total British population, a marked increase from the 52.5 percent of the population being served in 1911.⁹ In addi-

⁸ Alfred Hessel, A History of Libraries (New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1955), p. 108.

⁹ S. R. Ranganathan, A. Neelamegham and A. K. Gupta, Free Book Service for All: An International Survey (Bombay: Asia Publ. House, 1961), pp. 431-3.

tion, 30 percent of the total population are registered users, an increase of 6 percent from the 1950's. Also, during the sixties, the nation wide public library system expanded rapidly to consist of over 560 central administrative units, 1750 branches, and 20,000 part time outlets.¹⁰ Professional staff increased from 4,238 in 1962-63 to 5,431 in 1965-66.¹¹ Commenting on additional major accomplishments, Johnson writes:

*... the British public libraries have pioneered in branch libraries, book-mobiles, library service by mail, library service to hospitals and institutions, and in general library cooperation, so that they have taken a lead in the library world and set examples of service for all to follow.*¹²

b) The United States

The United States, it has been said, was the "first country in the world to recognize the need for legislation to streamline the provision of public library service."¹³ Johnson's assertion, that "state encouragement of public libraries was a significant factor, both in permissive legislation and in the formation of state

¹⁰ Johnson, History of Libraries, p. 228.

¹¹ Ranganathan, Free Book Service for All, p. 432.

¹² Johnson, History of Libraries, p. 201.

¹³ Ranganathan, Free Book Service for All, p. 437.

library commissions,"¹⁴ also supports this statement. The passage of the New Hampshire State legislation, in 1849, "authorizing towns to appropriate money for the establishment and maintenance of public libraries,"¹⁵ marked the beginning of the development of the modern public library in the United States. In 1851, a similar law was passed by the State of Massachusetts, and in 1854 by the State of Maine. Despite the passing of such significant legislation, it was not until 1858, when the Boston Public Library was established, that the public library movement really began to take shape. Hessel's account of this period indicates that it was, in general, a state of slow progress up until the year 1876, which was "something of a wonder year in American cultural history ... "

... In that year the American Library Association was founded, and the first number of the Library Journal appeared. The American catalogue and the special report of the United States Bureau of Education of public libraries were published. The Library Bureau was established to supply libraries with the various kinds of equipment they require. Melvil Dewey published the first edition of his Decimal Classification and took a leading part in creating the American Library Association.¹⁶

¹⁴Johnson, History of Libraries, p. 364.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 359.

¹⁶Hessel, A History of Libraries, p. 104.

Even with these modest achievements, however, public library development during the early 1900's was greatly hampered by administrative and organizational problems. Johnson's account of the conditions testifies to the fact that the average public library was "new, small and struggling ... "

... The staffs were small, poorly paid, and almost completely untrained, although not necessarily inexperienced. Besides book budgets, buildings and equipment, the public library was also concerned with such problems as open stacks versus closed stacks, service to children, relations with school hours of opening ...

.....
The largest cities had branch libraries or library stations, but the great majority of public libraries were still one-room, one librarian institutions.¹⁷

The early depression years further compounded the problems for the library movement. Budget cuts caused major curtailment of services: the closing of branches, discontinuation of bookmobile services, reduction in hours of service, and some suspension of children's services.¹⁸ In 1933, however, the federal government assumed a significant degree of leadership in promoting public library development. Funds were provided through a new program which was designed to alleviate some of the hardship

¹⁷ Johnson, History of Libraries, p. 366.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 370.

brought on by the Depression - the Works Progress Administration. The money went towards erecting new buildings, establishing new programs, extending bookmobile services in many areas, and library extension services in countries in which there was no previous library service. Thus, by 1939, some form of library service was available to two-thirds of the nation. During the twenty years following World War II, more Federal and State legislation was passed which assisted in making public library service accessible to an increasing portion of the American population.

Other developments during this period were to greatly enhance the movement. The first of these was the 1948 American Library Association's Plan for Public Library Service. Included in this report were the present conditions of public libraries and standards for their general improvement. The Public Library Inquiry, a survey on the conditions of libraries in 1949-50 brought to the forefront the absolute necessity of increased federal aid for libraries. This led to the passing of the Library Services Act by Congress in 1956. In the Act, provisions were also made for the federal funding of libraries in rural areas and small towns. The Library Services and Construction Act of 1964 provided additional funds which assisted in the development of state and local library systems. By 1966, these multi-library systems were fast

becoming the norm. In addition to the support from Federal, State and local governments, efforts to promote the development of the public library were made by philanthropists, such as Andrew Carnegie, by publishers, educationists and voluntary organizations. It is obvious, therefore, that great progress was made since the beginning of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the public library system in the United States had room for improvement:

There are still many millions of Americans without access to public libraries, and many millions more, probably half the nation in fact, who had only inadequate services ... Most Americans were still served by libraries where the books were too few or too old, where funds were insufficient, and where staffs were too small or insufficiently trained. The ideals of library service were apparent, but the implementation was lacking.¹⁹

C) Canada

The modern public library in Canada developed slowly during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1882, the first piece of legislation relating to the establishment and support of public libraries was passed. This was the Ontario Free Libraries Act, authorizing the levy of taxes for the support of free public libraries. Following this, many of the "association" libraries and semi-public libraries were converted into the subscription

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 375.

type of libraries. Until the end of the nineteenth century, these were to be the main types of free libraries found throughout Canada.

In the early twentieth century, there was significant development in the modern library. Between 1901 and 1917, with the aid of funds provided by the Carnegie Corporation in the United States, public libraries were erected in many regions throughout Canada. Interest in public libraries had reached a stage where all provinces were then establishing or enlarging public libraries. A major innovation, the travelling libraries, were providing free public library service to individuals and groups in rural areas. The Ontario Library Association was formed in 1901; this was followed by the formation of library associations in the other provinces. It was during this period, also, that training courses for librarians were started.

The period of 1920-1945 saw significant developments which were to further promote the growth of the public library in Canada - these were, the establishment of library branches and the hiring of trained librarians. The financial support for public libraries increased with the passing of provincial legislation. A Commission which was appointed in 1927 to survey conditions of library services in Canada, made a number of recommendations in its report

published in 1933.²⁰ Two of these recommendations were to influence major developments during this period, and were to have a lasting effect on the development of public libraries in Canada. The first was the formation of the Canadian Library Association in 1946; and the second was the introduction of regional library systems. With reference to the latter development, H. C. Campbell writes:

It was from the Commission's report that the acceptance of the idea of regional library service, with its trained librarians and an adequate collection of suitable books, housed in a central depository, with numerous branches and deposit stations, gained general support. The regional library unit was, in time, to develop in the parts of Canada where there were county governments into county and inter-county organization.²¹

From the end of World War II to the present, there has been continued progress in the free public library ser-

²⁰ Libraries in Canada, A Study of Library Conditions and Needs (Toronto: Ryerson Press and Chicago: American Library Association, 1933).

²¹ H. C. Campbell, Canadian Libraries (Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1969), p. 14. The development to which the author refers is the Frazer Valley Regional Library of 1933, called in the 1930's, The Frazer Valley Union Library. This was considered to be the first attempt in the world to encourage a large number of municipal governments to work together, and it succeeded. The particular success of the Frazer Valley Regional Library was the welding of library services for 125 towns, villages and other rural areas into a unified whole.

vice in Canada. With the spate of Provincial Acts and Amendments, the sustained efforts of the Canadian Library Association and other provincial, regional and local library associations, the modern conception of public librarianship²² has taken root in Canada and has received wide acceptance. A number of regional systems have been established in all the provinces, with every indication that they will continue to progress. An example of this growth is the public library in the province of Saskatchewan, with its seven regional libraries linked to form a provincial system. This is considered to be strongest provincial library system in Canada. It is comprised of branch services, bookmobiles, books by mail, and book deposits in Indian and Metis communities.

Although great progress has been made since the beginning of the century, there remains in Canada a large portion of the population without adequate public library service, particularly in the small towns and isolated areas. However, the prospects seem bright. Johnson delineates some of the favourable conditions which support this optimism. These, among others, are "the mounting financial support for libraries, the active library

²²The term is used here to denote all aspects of public libraries - services, programs, resources, personnel, etc. See Operational Definition in Chapter I.

associations, and the willingness to break with tradition and try new methods."²³ In addition to these positive factors, according to Johnson:

*Canada is in the fortunate position of being able to benefit from the library developments of both Europe and the United States, ... Her resources, both economic and human, are relatively limitless, and the future of libraries there can be just as hopeful. Canada will be an interesting nation to watch in the future development of libraries and information control.*²⁴

B) Public Library Response to Social Change

Rogers and Burdge define social change as "the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and functions of a social system."²⁵ A social system, as defined by the same authors, is a "collectivity of units that are functionally differentiated and that are engaged in joint problem-solving with respect to a common good."²⁶ To relate more closely these definitions to the topic under discussion, social change refers to the processes by which

²³ Johnson, History of Libraries, p. 466.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Everett M. Rogers and Rabel J. Burdge, Social Change in Rural Societies (2nd ed.: New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), p. 10.

²⁶ Ibid.

the structure and functions of a community are altered; and the social system is the library. These distinctions are the basis of the analysis of the impact of the alterations (social change) on the nature of the roles and functions of the public library (social system).

The authors of an international survey of the development of the public library outline five global social forces which had direct impact on the direction and growth of the modern public library during the last hundred years. These global forces, the report states, are generated by (1) development in sociological thought or social thought; (2) development in political thought; (3) development of industrialization or modernization in general; (4) spread of universal education; and (5) creation and production of books in abundance.²⁷ Four of these will be examined in relation to the changing role of libraries in response to social change.

a) Development in Social Thought

"The public library is open to all who choose to enter. No restriction because of fees or financial status exists."²⁸ Today, this is one of the universal principles of public libraries. It was not the case, how-

²⁷ Ranganathan, Free Book Service for All, p. 26.

²⁸ Bryan Luckham, The Library in Society (London: Library Association, 1931), p. 3.

ever, during the mid-nineteenth century, when the development of the public library was beginning in Europe and North America. There were many social barriers which prevented a large majority of the population of these countries from gaining access to public library service. Accessibility was largely determined by a person's birth, wealth, intellectual capacity or occupation. Public libraries, then, were considered to be conservatories of books and librarians saw themselves as book custodians, restricting the lending of books to a small elite group. All this was to change, however, with the development of social thought in Europe. This new development sought to bring about changes in class structure, in the related attitudes and laws, particularly those governing public institutions. A major consequence of the development of social thought was the proletarianization of knowledge, and this was to have major implications for the public library. The first implication was the acknowledgement by the public library of the right to free and equal access of all individuals to its resources, programs and services. In response to this change, public libraries had to alter their operations and administrative structure in order to meet the library needs of a greatly increased and varied clientele. There was a fundamental change in the conception of the public library from that of a conservatory of books to that of a circulator of books. This was accom-

panied by changes in organization and operations. For example, library hours were extended, trained librarians were hired, branch and travelling libraries were developed, and public library extension programs were now being offered.

(b) Development in Political Thought

The second major global force - development in political thought - has generated perhaps the most radical social changes throughout the world since the beginning of the twentieth century. The most significant was the granting of universal adult suffrage which was later to lead to the wave of independence and national movements in countries that were previously colonized. Accompanying this development were: the affirmation of individual and group rights in the political process; the participation of ordinary citizens in the decision-making process; and the overall secularization and proletarianization of government and political institutions. These changes emphasized the need for easy access to reliable information for decision-making and for effective citizen participation.

Prior to this development, the public library was perceived to be essentially cultural or recreational institutions. With the changing demand for public information, however, it had the added task of meeting the information

needs of the community. As a response to this development, the provision of information, i.e., the collection, organization and dissemination of it, was now a major objective of the public library. Information and reference services are, in fact, among the most important operations of the public library today. It has become one of the basic criteria by which public library service can be judged; that is, how well a particular public library is meeting the information needs of its community.

c) Industrialization or Modernization

With regard to the third global force - industrialization of modernization in general - the need for technical information for people engaged in industry and farming, and the increasing demand for vocational education, created new challenges for the public library. For example, during the periods of the Industrial Revolution in Britain and in the United States, the growing need for technically trained workers made it necessary for public libraries to supplement the work of vocational training centres. The public library provided needed resources; organized vocational classes, and participated with other adult education agencies, in the planning of vocational training programs. In the United States, another way in which public libraries responded to changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution, was to assist

individuals and groups to cope with the changes, by providing moral education. "Industrialization and increasing urbanization," writes Robert Lee, "gave rise to new social and moral problems: crime, alcoholism, gambling, prostitution and child delinquency."²⁹ Lee tells how the American people, in search of a solution to these problems, turned to the public library:

*the leading citizens ... asserted that, in addition to the moral instruction provided by the public school, a public library would be a potent enemy of crime and a continuing means of moral elevation for the working adult.*³⁰

d) Spread of Universal Education

The fourth major global social force to be discussed in relation to the changing roles and functions of the public library is the spread of universal education. The adult education movement taking place in developing countries over the last decade is an indication of the major implications of this development for the public library. Much has been written about the literary campaigns and national programs to promote functional literacy and education in these countries. In countries such as

²⁹ Robert Ellis Lee, Continuing Education for Adults Through the American Public Library, 1833-1964 (Chicago: American Library Association, 1966), p. 3.

³⁰ Ibid.

India, the public library has been called upon to play an increasingly active role in the promotion of education. It is gradually assuming major responsibilities in making available opportunities for self-education, and in the planning and execution of organized adult education activities. In addition, the public library is being asked to seek out the uneducated and to assist and encourage them to participate in planned education activities. This has been a fundamental change for the public library in many of these countries for, only about a decade ago, the public library was performing primarily a cultural role, serving a limited elite of educated people.

C. Major Trends in Public Library Service Today in the United States

A survey carried out in the 1960's examining trends in the development of the public library in the United States, reveals major changes and tendencies in public library philosophy, in the concept of public library, its purposes, and the perceived role of libraries over the last decade.³¹ The overall indication is that the public library is assuming a more dynamic role in society. The report states that, since the early 1960's:

There has been a trend from:

³¹Ibid., p. 106.

A leaning toward recreational reading to recognition of the importance of reference and informational services.

Dependence on a limited staff to the involvement of more people in the library's program

Striving as individual libraries to meet standards of good library service to cooperation between libraries in the state in a variety of ways to accomplish their objectives

Library service within the library only, to service throughout the community

Use of books alone to use of all media of communication.³²

Of particular interest to this study is the indication that public library service is no longer confined within the library; the tendency is rather towards taking library services and programs to the community. The report states:

Librarians are assuming less and less that their duties are bounded by the library walls, but are looking up from their desks and out at the community, and are perceiving the need for library service in community life. Hence, they are going out into the community, making contacts with groups and individuals, bringing the library to them. They are holding program institutes and workshops, sponsoring and co-sponsoring discussion groups, film forums and other activities. To reach individuals not connected with groups they are using the various communications media: newspaper, radio and television.³³

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., p. 106-7.

Summary

Once the public library has been defined as a library which is publicly supported and provides free service to all members of the community, it can be established that the public library is a development of the late nineteenth century and twentieth century. From its early conception, a number of social forces had direct implications for the library. These forces were developments in social and political thought, modernization or industrialization, the spread of universal education and the creation and production of books in abundance. In response to the social changes brought about by these developments, the public library has departed from its traditional role as a conservatory of books, to take on a more dynamic role in all spheres of community life. In library operations, meeting the information and educational needs of the community has become a major consideration. In attempting to respond to the changing demands of its public, the library is continuously changing. The trends in public library service in the United States is an indication of this. For example, taking library services and programs into the community is a major trend in public library service today. It is with these significant developments in mind, that the writer of this thesis will, in the chapters to follow, make recommendations and sug-

gest strategies regarding the leadership role of the public library in the community development process.

CHAPTER III

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

In the preceding chapter, the writer avoided, for the most part, making a distinction between urban and rural libraries; moreover, no attempt was made to discuss the development of libraries with relation to size. There are, of course, differences in the services provided, depending upon whether the libraries are urban or rural, small or large. In the present chapter, however, it is the small rural public library which will be examined in relation to four major elements of the community development process. They are information, communication, adult education and community decision-making. These elements will be analyzed in order to explore possible ways in which the small rural public library can contribute to the total community development process. At this point, however, it is necessary to discuss briefly the general state of public library service in rural communities.

In spite of innovations (for example, the county

library systems established in Britain in 1910, the regional systems organized in Canada in the 1930's, and the combined efforts of international agencies such as UNESCO and national governments in the developing countries), public library service is still unavailable to a significant percentage¹ of the rural population of developing and developed countries. Where these services are provided, they usually fall short of the general standards of public library service. One of the main reasons most often cited for this is lack of financial support. Another major reason, particularly in many of the developing countries, is the misconception, on the part of government leaders, regarding the public library and its potential contribution to the social, economic and educational development in these countries.²

Only recently are concerted efforts being made to provide public library service to small, isolated rural communities. Travelling libraries, bookmobiles, library

¹For a general picture of the library situation in rural areas, see (1) United Nations, Access to Books (Paris: UNESCO, 1949), concerning developing countries; and (2) S. R. Ranganathan, A. Neelamegham, and A. K. Gupta, Free Book Service for All: An International Survey (Bombay: Asia Publ. House, 1968), concerning both developed and developing countries.

²United Nations, Access to Books, p. 8.

extension services and library pilgrimages such as those in India³ are some of these efforts. In addition, governments and library professionals are attempting, with some success, to educate rural people to the importance of public libraries in their community. For example, it has been stated that, in Pakistan, the "government, the general public, and the librarians now realize that a network of library service in the country is not only necessary, but imperative to raise the present rate of literacy, to create consciousness among the masses and to provide channels for consumption of literacy output of the nation."⁴ Furthermore, library leaders are agitating for changes in the present library system. They argue that, in order for the rural community to receive satisfactory library service, the idea of a "cooperative use of resources and trained personnel"⁵ must be put into practice. This argument has received wide support from all quarters. For example, the American rural sociologist David Lindstrom has this to say in support of a cooperative library system:

³The library pilgrimages in India are carried out by a team of community workers, professional librarians and extension specialists. They travel as a team to remote rural areas, to promote library development and to provide library services.

⁴Ranganathan, Neelameghan and Gupta, Free Book Service for All, p. 342.

⁵University of Illinois Library School, The Library as a Community Information Centre (Champaign, Illinois, 1959), p. v.

If free public library service is to reach or to be available to all rural people, then it must be organized on the basis of an integrated state, regional, county and community library service.⁶

Adherence to a system which provides limited services because of insufficient funds, inadequate supply of materials, and untrained personnel, makes only for stunted growth in the development of the public library in the small rural community. As is pointed out by the Alberta Library Trustees Association and the Library Association of Alberta:

The small public libraries are often the only libraries which can reach people in many villages, towns and rural areas. The system must therefore be changed in order to:

- 1. Make wider use of total resources in the province and the nation*
- 2. Provide services not presently offered*
- 3. Plug into a provincial and national information network.⁷*

It seems, therefore, that, if there is to be marked improvement in public library services in rural areas, recommendations such as those offered in the Alberta con-

⁶David E. Lindstrom, Rural Social Change (Champaign, Illinois, 1960), p. 199.

⁷Alberta Library Trustees Association and The Library Association of Alberta, Statement on Library Service in the Province of Alberta, 1972, p. 3 (typewritten).

text will have to be implemented, modified according to the conditions that exist in a particular country.

A. The Community Development Process

There are, of course, numerous definitions of Community Development, and they cannot all be considered here. What is important is the fact that in any good definition of the Community Development Process, the following elements are invariably included: (1) the purposeful creation of learning situations; (2) the development of techniques for increasing individual and community awareness and confidence; and (3) the encouragement of meaningful involvement in community activities. These are the elements essential to the Community Development Process, as has already been determined in the Operational Definitions in Chapter I. Mezirow defines the Community Development Process in the following terms:

... A planned and organized effort to assist individuals to acquire the attitudes, skills, and concepts required for their democratic participation in the effective solution of as wide a range of community improvement problems as possible in an order of priority determined by their increasing levels of competence.⁸

⁸ J. D. Mezirow, "Community Development as an Educational Process," Community Development, National Training Laboratories, No. 4 (1961), p. 16. See also Irwin T. Sanders, "The Concept of Community Development," in L. E. Cary, ed., Community Development as a Process (Columbia:

(continued)

Sehnert sees the process as involving "study, training, education, planning, organizing, and action that brings the cognitive purposeful change toward the community goals."⁹ In order to facilitate these processes, there are certain minimum prerequisites. Some of these are: free and ready access to the informational resources within and outside of the community; the establishment and maintenance of channels of communication; opportunities for organized and informal adult education activities; and a commitment on the part of community leaders and key workers to encourage community participation in the decision-making process. For any community, urban or rural, developed or underdeveloped, embarking on a program of planned social change, and following the community development approach, these are some of the important conditions which it will be necessary to meet. They are perhaps even more vital to the community development process, than the community development agencies, technical specialists and government bureaucrats. For it is mainly through these means that the human resources of the com-

⁸ (continued) University of Missouri Press, 1970), pp. 9-31; and William W. Biddle and Loureide Biddle, The Community Development Process: The Rediscovery of Local Initiative (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 78-9.

⁹ Frank H. Sehnert, "A Functional Framework for the Action Process in Community Development," Carbondale: Dept. of Community Development, Southern Illinois University, 1961.

munity can be developed, as citizens systematically contribute to the changes sought in their community. The importance of these elements, and possible ways in which the public library can promote the process, will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

B. Information

a) The Vital Role of Information in the Community Development Process

Implicit in the term community development is the desire to create favourable change - social, economic and political - and to assist individual members in the community in responding to these changes. It is here that information becomes important. Information, in this context, "relates to the importing, exchanging or transferring of knowledge, skills, values, ideas, concepts and principles which may contribute to the encouragement of change and assist individuals in responding to change."¹⁰ As Schramm points out, it is difficult for change to take place unless people are "informed, persuaded and educated...

*Information must flow not only to them,
but also from them, so that their needs*

¹⁰ J. P. Leagans, H. Copeland and G. E. Kaiser, Selected Concepts from Educational Psychology and Adult Education for Extension and Continuing Educators (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1971), pp. 9-32.

can be known and so that they may participate in the acts and decisions of nation building, and information must flow vertically so that decisions may be made, work organized, and skills learned at all levels of society.¹¹

If a climate of change is to be established and sustained, it is imperative that reliable sources of information be made accessible to the people of the community.¹² Information, thus, becomes a means of helping individuals to "survey a new environment, raise ... (their) aspirations, guide and control a dynamic process, teach new skills and socialize citizens to a new and different society that is still only in the process of becoming."¹³

In a number of studies,¹⁴ it has been shown that, in order for development to take place efficiently, certain functions must be assigned to the information gatherers and disseminators. Schramm assigns to them three key functions: (i) the watchman function; (ii) the policy function; and (iii) the teaching function.¹⁵

¹¹ Wilbur Schramm, Mass Media and National Development (Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 246.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm, Communication and Change in the Developing Countries (Honolulu: East West Centre Press, 1967), p. 6.

¹⁴ See also Leonard W. Doob, Communication in Africa (Yale University Press, 1961); Y. V. Rao, Communication and Development (University of Minnesota Press, 1966); and S. C. Dube, India's Changing Villages (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958).

¹⁵ Schramm, Mass Media and National Development, pp. 41-44.

(i) The Watchman Function: This involves the dual task of observing and reporting changes taking place in the environment. This function is particularly essential in the community taking an active role in bringing about change, for such change can sometimes demand profound alterations in the traditional way of life. In the first place, the very fact that the formerly isolated rural community is now gradually being involved in national plans for development means that the rural community must now be seen in a much wider context. It is because of this widened horizon that the function of watchman becomes more vital. Information regarding the changes in the immediate environment and the regional and national environment must be widely distributed among all members of the rural community, if they are to develop greater awareness of their role in national development efforts. It is, therefore, through information that the rural community will be linked with the larger national community; it is also through information that local members will be assisted in interpreting these changes and in understanding the implications from a local and national perspective. This has been, in fact, one of the basic principles of community development - the belief that local community efforts should be in agreement with those at the national level. In this way, moreover, cooperation of a voluntary nature between the local

community and the larger society is promoted.

(ii) The Policy Function: This is another crucial task assigned to those responsible for providing information in the small rural community. Schramm points out that:

A developing country finds that it must spread its essential decision-making more widely. For one thing, it wants the active participation of its people. Beyond that, it is asking people to make individual decisions that are of the greatest difficulty and importance. In effect, they are being asked to decide for modernity, and to change their lives and beliefs accordingly. They are being asked to accept new goals, new attitudes, new customs, new responsibilities. This will require both information and persuasion.¹⁶

If people living in rural communities are to make rational decisions, they must have access to reliable information and be encouraged to seek such information. Studies show that, in general, citizens of rural communities have limited knowledge of government policies and are, in some cases, ignorant of, or misinformed about their own local conditions. The community development process seeks to fill this information void by making available increased sources of information designed to meet local needs. In performing its "policy function," then, information greatly enhances the decision-making process in the small rural community. First, the rural population is given

¹⁶Schramm, Mass Media and National Development, p. 42.

the opportunity to arrive at some consensus regarding the nature of the changes desired, and action to be taken to effect these changes. Secondly, through information, community members become aware of other alternatives; of an increasing number of ideas and means of bringing about desired changes. Similarly, local and national governments become more informed about rural conditions, and are more sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the local community. This, in turn, helps to eliminate the distrust of government and feelings of alienation which are characteristic of rural peoples.

(iii) The Teaching Function: The community development process seeks to encourage, in the rural community, the learning of new skills, the adaptation of new attitudes and values and, in general, the modification of the traditional way of life. As Schramm points out, "Change will not take place unless those who are expected to change know and accept the reasons, methods, and the rewards for changing."¹⁷ - This knowledge and acceptance is effected through information in its role as teacher, in the total community development process. "Teaching function" refers to the dissemination of information designed to encourage rural people to develop attitudes favourable to innovation and change. This is possible because infor-

¹⁷Ibid., p. 253.

mation that seeks to explain a new attitude or a new skill, that assists the individual in determining the benefits to be gained from the change, can make such change more acceptable. The teaching function also includes motivation of the rural community to seek additional sources of information which would assist them in the following ways: (1) in the diagnosis of community problems; (2) in the planning of community improvement programs; (3) in the execution of these plans; and (4) in the evaluation of their efforts. At each of these stages, access to pertinent information is essential. Where this information is not readily available, and in cases where community members are unaware of, or tend to ignore, the importance of such information, strategies must be developed to ensure that the community become increasingly educated to the advantages of utilizing available information.

C) The Role of the Public Library in Information Supply

Having discussed some of the major functions of information in the community development process, the writer will examine the vital role of the public library in meeting the informational needs of the small rural community. Speaking of the social framework of the community and the part played by the library, Peter McCormick states that:

A community's social resources are the institutions of society which have resulted from group living. They are the instruments by which a community carries out its group functions and satisfies its needs. Such social resources as business, government, educational and cultural institutions, health and welfare agencies, recreational facilities and the like, are all necessary elements in our way of life. The library is an important part of this social framework.¹⁸

In this statement, McCormick has identified some of the possible sources of information to be found in the rural community. The various forms of mass media may also be added, that is, newspapers, radio, television, magazines, books, and the like, although they are, perhaps not as effective in meeting the information needs of the local community or particular individual needs. One reason for this is that the messages carried by the mass media are standardized, intended for a large audience, and, therefore, not tailored for any one particular community.

Perhaps more than any other existing source, community agencies make available some needed information; however, it has been found that there is, in general, an information void in rural communities. To facilitate the community development process, therefore, a more efficient

¹⁸Peter J. McCormick, "Identifying the Library's Public and Community," in The Library as a Community Information Centre (Champaign, Illinois: Illinois Union Bookstore, 1959), pp. 12-17.

means of supplying information must be sought. It has been suggested and supported that the public library has the potential for fulfilling this role, perhaps more so than any other institution or agency likely to be found in the small rural community. The following statements made by public library leaders offer some indications of the perceived role of the public library in the dissemination of information and ideas in the community:

... We no longer speak of libraries simply as repositories of books and manuscripts (the most ancient meaning), but also as centers of information and disseminators of ideas ... This decade, then, is an especially dynamic one in which the library profession is revising many of its age-old concepts, from the nature of the materials it organizes to the buildings that house those materials, to the public that utilizes them and the librarian's means of reaching that public.¹⁹

An American, David Libbey, writes:

If the library is to go beyond custodial and book distribution services, beyond adult education programs, and still farther beyond the present agglomeration of its other services, it will still find its most immediate and varied challenge within the community... the library service most needed by the population at large in the community is an information service which will help its members live more understandingly and more enjoyably in their communities.²⁰

¹⁹Robert A. Colby, ed., The Library Educator in the Community (New Haven: Southern Connecticut State College, Division of Library Service, New Haven, Connecticut, 1965), pp. 1-3.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 5-6.

In his discussion of the need for improved local information services in the rural communities of developing countries, Mookerje states that:

The library centre should be the proper place for all local information, about the locality, the people and everything bordering them. Any newcomer or a foreigner visiting the locality generally walks up to the library for any particulars he may need about the country, about any individual, about local history, local industry, local trade, local movement, places of interest, etc.²¹

These statements regarding the importance of the public library in the supply of reliable information in the local community are generally supported by the stated objectives of modern public libraries. One such objective is the collection, organization and dissemination of information according to community needs. In the light of these statements, a recommendation regarding the role of a public library in the community development process can be made.

Suggestion I. It is recommended that, in the small rural community, where a public library already exists, concerted efforts be made to promote it as the community information resource centre, in order to effectively meet local community information needs, and

²¹S. K. Mookerje, Development of Libraries and Library Science in India (Calcutta: World Press, 1969), p. 352.

provide leadership in the reporting, teaching and policy making functions in the community. For the community without a public library, this should be a goal of the community leaders and citizens. The members of the community should first be made aware of the potential contributions of a public library to the community; this should be followed by a concerted effort on the part of change agents, local leaders, national and local governments, in the establishment and maintenance of a public library as the community information centre.

D) Communication²²

*Wherever change impends, wherever change occurs in human society, there communication flows... Communication is asked to help survey a new environment, raise people's aspirations, guide and control a dynamic process, teach new skills, and socialize citizens to a new and different society that is still in the process of becoming.*²³

In this statement, Schramm has identified the essential functions of communication in any program of planned

²²There has been a tendency in the literature to confuse the usage of this term with that of "Information." For our present purposes, communication, both mass media and interpersonal, refers to the process whereby information, ideas, knowledge, etc., are transmitted. Used in this sense, the term is not interchangeable with "Information."

²³Lerner and Schramm, Communication and Change, p. 6.

systematic change, that is, of community development. In the community development process, it is imperative that efficient channels and strategies of communication be developed and maintained; this for the purposes of imparting knowledge and ideas, of promoting understanding among all parties involved in the community development effort - national and local governments, local community leaders, change agents and the community as a whole.

Rogers and Svenning define communication as the "process by which messages are transferred from a source to one or more receivers."²⁴ It is, in the authors' words, "a vital aspect of social change."²⁵ The community development process demands a knowledgeable and informed community; it demands, too, that the people be made aware of new ideas, new skills that they be motivated to become increasingly involved in community affairs, and that this interest in social action be sustained. In all stages of the community development process, therefore, the promotion of efficient means of communication is an indispensable factor. This is perhaps more decisive in the small rural community, where opportunities for efficient communication are, in general, limited.

²⁴ Everett M. Rogers and Lynne Svenning, Modernization Among Peasants (New York: Appleton Century-Crofts, 1972), p. 107.

²⁵ Ibid.

(1) Communication as a Means of Stimulating
Local Initiative

Community development seeks to find ways of overcoming the apathy and passivity that are characteristic of a large percentage of rural peoples, whose motivation for change has often been described as limited. One way in which it seeks to do this is through helping rural people to develop their self confidence and social consciousness, so that gradually they can become more enthusiastic in defining community problems and in working together to solve them. Since this animation process places major emphasis on group effort and cooperation of a voluntary nature, the communication process becomes a crucial factor. The aspirations of the people must be raised; they must develop an awareness of vital community issues, and be encouraged to assume increasing responsibilities in deciding upon community action. These can hardly be accomplished without free and open channels of communication among the people themselves, between change agents and the people, and between government leaders and the local community. Communication is, therefore, seen here as a means of achieving increased community initiative and individual growth. It is of primary importance in motivating rural people to participate in the planning and execution of community action programs, and to take part in the dis-

cussion of issues that affect their community.

(ii) The Transmission of Knowledge, Skills and Information

One of the principal objectives of community development in rural areas is to encourage the use of new methods; for example, in farming or in organizing for collective action. As necessary preliminaries, the people need to be made aware of the innovation; they must develop the necessary technical and social skills; and in addition, they must be provided with pertinent information about the particular innovation. Here, also, efficient means of communication is essential. For it is only by making available the needed information that the people can become knowledgeable about the innovation, and it is on the basis of this reliable information that a rational choice regarding its adoption or rejection can be made. This, therefore, necessitates effective communication between those who are seeking to introduce the new idea and the members of the community. It also involves the necessity of some mechanism for feedback, whereby the innovators are kept informed of the people's ideas and their progress. In addition to the maintenance of open lines of communication between the people of the community and the innovators, the rural people must be given the opportunity to meet and discuss, and critically evaluate, their own ef-

forts. In any case, it is of prime importance that community members develop skills for effectively communicating their ideas and suggestions among themselves and to key community workers and leaders.

(iii) Maintaining Sustained Interest in Community Affairs and Activities

In order to achieve increased community involvement, awareness of community development activities must be promoted, and the interest in them sustained.

The people must be constantly made aware of such activities taking place in their own community as well as in others. They must also be alerted to the plans and policies made by local and national governments which may affect their own programs of social action. On the other hand, national and local governments must be kept continuously informed of the development activities of the local community, since these may have implications for the planning of national development goals. In each case, the establishment of channels of communication between government and the people, and between communities, is of utmost importance in the community development process. Considered in this light, communication not only intensifies the cooperative spirit between the community and its government, but it serves as a powerful means through which governments and the community involved in programs of social action can

develop mutual interest in their respective problems and solutions. On another level, efficient communication is not only likely to maintain the individual's awareness of the activities in his own community, but it provides him with the opportunity to develop a keener understanding of the changes occurring. This may, in turn, lead to further development of those attitudes favourable to change in the individual.

E) The Role of the Public Library as a Facilitator of Communication

The above discussion focussed on the importance of communication in the community development process, and outlined possible ways in which communication can facilitate the process. It has been shown, however, that within the small rural community, opportunities for public communication have been limited. It is here that the public library can fulfill another significant role in the community development process.

Suggestion II. It is recommended that the public library in the small rural community assume the role of communication centre of the community, by planning strategies and programs to promote efficient communication within and between communities.

It has been suggested, that in accepting this

role, public libraries

will have an unusual opportunity to provide community leadership in the consideration of the problems of the day... Their task then becomes one of a stimulator of action and this, in turn, leads to more effective accomplishment of their service to individuals. When the citizen is engaged in thought and planning, he needs help in obtaining pertinent facts, knowledge of traditions of involved programs of other communities, and ideas of contemporary leaders. What better place than the library to seek such help?²⁶

David Libbey's views on the role of the library support the proposition that the public library, as the community communication centre, can promote communication between government and the people:

The library has a unique opportunity to serve as an open channel of communication between the local government and the local citizen or, for that matter, between all levels of government and the citizen. More often than not, the communications channels that do exist are outside of the influence of the individual, so that no forum is available for consultation, discussion, agreement or for the exercise of community sanction. Furthermore, the library can mediate among the numerous local organizations and the individual citizen of the community.²⁷

²⁶ B. W. Kreitlow, E. Aiton and Andrew P. Torrence, Leadership for Action in Rural Communities (Illinois: Danville, 1960), pp. 29-30.

²⁷ David C. Libbey, "The Library as a Community Information Centre for the Citizen of the Community," in R. Colby, ed., The Library Educator in the Community (New Haven, Connecticut, 1965), pp. 8-9.

Many of the functions which the public library will be called upon to perform as the communication centre of the small rural community are already been fulfilled through their extension programs, readers' guidance and outreach programs. In many of these programs, members of the library staff are called upon to perform various leadership roles. Among their tasks may be that of encouraging, stimulating and motivating community members to utilize the facilities and resources of the libraries for the purposes of discussion groups, forums and panels, etc. These all serve to improve the communication process in the local community.

F) Adult Education

J. P. Leagans and his associates define adult education as the "process by which men and women, either alone or in groups, try to improve their knowledge, skills, or sensitivities, or the process by which individuals and institutions attempt to change people in these ways."²⁸ Of all the numerous definitions of the term, this one comes closest to the real significance of adult education, because it takes into account both the learner and the change agent, as well as the desired outcome. There is also an implication in this definition that the activities are

²⁸J. P. Leagans, Harland Copeland and G. E. Kaiser, Selected Concepts from Educational Psychology and Adult Education for Extension Workers and Continuing Educators (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1971), p. 76.

organized in some way.

(a) Relationship of Adult Education to the Community Development Process

An examination of adult education - the processes involved, strategies, and the basic philosophy - reveals that it is closely related to the community development process. Indeed, the philosophy of adult education as outlined by Edward C. Lindeman in the mid 1920's lends support to the assertion made in community development literature, that the success of community development programs is largely dependent upon the use of adult education processes and strategies. Lindeman wrote in 1926:

I am conceiving of adult education in terms of a new technique for learning ... a process by which the adult learns to become aware of and to evaluate his experience ... In this process, the teacher is no longer the oracle who speaks from the platform of authority, but rather the guide, the pointer, but who participates in learning in proportion to the vitality and relevancy of his facts and experiences. In short, my conception of adult education is this: a cooperative venture in non-authoritarian informal learning, the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience ... a technique of learning for adults which makes education coterminous with life and hence elevates living itself to the level of adventurous experiment.²⁹

²⁹ Robert Gessner, ed., *The Democratic Man: Selected Writings of Edward C. Lindeman* (Boston, 1956), pp. 160-2.

Lindeman's conception of adult education still remains operative today, as can be seen in the efforts made by governments of both the developed and developing countries to include adult education as a major part of their development programs. Programs such as adult literacy campaigns, social education, vocational training programs are all intended to provide organized educational experiences to the adults in the community, by means of adult education techniques.

With regard to the relatedness of adult education to the community development process, another major factor is behavioural changes necessary to both processes. Adult education, like community development, seeks to bring about changes in attitudes and improvement in knowledge and skills. In addition, both processes seek to effect changes in the community. They are both essentially activity-oriented kinds of learning, in which equal emphasis is placed on the tangible outcomes (such as the building of a community centre), and the intangibles (such as individual growth and community cooperation). Howard McClusky elaborates on this approach:

If a community sets up a project in improving health and recreational facilities, in the course of doing so, there will be an opportunity (often unexploited) to learn a lot of facts about problems of health and recreation. If it conducts a survey of conditions essential for the attraction of

new industry, the community should be in a position to acquire a lot of information about town and city planning, and so on for any area of living which it elects to improve. These are factual learnings which community development may stimulate. At the same time, however, it is also possible to learn about how the community is put together and the methods by which it may achieve its goals. These are the process and contextual learnings of community development.³⁰

The potential contribution of adult education to community development can best be determined through an examination of the major functions of adult education which have relevance for community development. Among the functions of adult educators, as outlined by Knowles, the following are most applicable to the community development process:

- 1) Helping the learners diagnose their needs for particular learnings within the scope of the given situation - the diagnostic function,
- 2) Planning with the learners a sequence of experiences that will produce the desired learnings - the planning function,
- 3) Helping the learners measure the outcomes of the learning experience - the evaluative function.³¹

(i) The Diagnostic Function. This function is best ex-

³⁰ Howard Y. McClusky, "Community Development," in Knowles, Malcolm S., Handbook of Adult Education in the United States (Washington, D. C., Adult Education Association, 1960), p. 419.

³¹ Knowles, Handbook of Adult Education, pp. 165-6.

plained through the use of an illustrative example: a group of local community members organize a meeting to discuss the problem of inadequate recreational facilities in their community. With the help of the change agent who, in this case, assumes the role of an adult educator, the group proceeds to determine for themselves the necessary information, resources and strategies, that will be required to achieve change in attitudes, and improvement in knowledge and skills at the community level. These changes assist them in working towards the particular objective. The process involved here is, in essence, one of self-diagnosis and community-diagnosis. As mentioned earlier, utilization of the adult of the adult education approaches has been shown to be one of the most effective ways of facilitating this process. There are advantages to this approach; one is that the community members are provided with the opportunity for maximum participation in the identification and analysis of what they perceive to be a community problem. Another advantage, and this is very important in the rural community, concerns the perceived role of the change agent in this situation. The adult education approach demands that he be a participant in the process rather than an "authoritarian" leader; in such a role, the change agent is likely to be more acceptable to the community, since he can clearly be seen to be working in the interests of

the people, rather than in those of the particular agency. This facilitates the easing of tensions and the removal of any prior suspicions of the agent's motives.

(ii) The Planning Function. Planning, according to Goulet, involves "identifying objectives, translating these into quantified targets, allocating resources in optimum fashion so as to reach targets in specified time spans, implementing, supervising efforts to implement plans, and evaluating performance and its consequences."³² For the purpose of illustration, the same situation will be used as an example: the problem of finding ways to improve recreational facilities in the rural community. It will be demonstrated that the change-agent who adheres to adult education strategies in the planning function can make a further significant contribution to the community development process.

At the end of the diagnosis stage, a consensus is reached within the group concerning the problem to be solved. The problem in this case may be the renovation of the recreational centre of the community. The change agent as adult educator, will assist the community in (a) analyzing the present situation; (b) making decisions as to the kinds of action that will be necessary; and

³² Denis Goulet, The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development (New York: American Publ., 1971), p. 173.

(c) observing and evaluating the progress of their efforts. This is another way in which adult education techniques can be utilized to achieve increased community involvement and cooperation; and, at the same time, aid in the development of individual competence in analytic and evaluative skills. The planning function, from the perspective of the adult educator, not only provides opportunities for community participation in designing the environment, it also ensures closer alliance between the change agent and the community. At the same time, it transfers to the local community the greater share of the responsibility for attaining goals set. And since these are among the desired results of the community development process, the potential contribution of adult education to the process cannot be overstated.

(iii) The Evaluative Function. In the community development process, emphasis is placed on the importance of continually judging the "worth, desirability, effectiveness or adequacy"³³ of the actions taken toward solving community problems. In addition, the process whereby participants can measure the outcome of their learning experiences is encouraged. Evaluation is, therefore, an essential element of community-action programs. The im-

³³Leagans, Copeland and Kaiser, Selected Concepts, p. 57.

portance of this element adds significance to the role of adult education in the community development process.

Commenting on the significance of the evaluation function, Malcolm S. Knowles states:

For one thing, the program can be changed. The objectives can be altered in the light of new needs and interests of participants that have been revealed in the evaluation process. They should be altered also in the light of developments in the institution and in the community. The operational efficiency of the organization can also be improved as a result of information required through the evaluation process.³⁴

Continuing with the example of the decision to carry out renovations of the community recreation centre, it will be necessary for those involved in the execution of plans for the renovation to be provided with the opportunities, and assisted in the development of the necessary skills, to periodically evaluate their efforts. Because the evaluation function in adult education is based primarily on helping participants to critically appraise the work they have accomplished, the significance of the role of adult education in the community development process is obvious. In the first place, it provides for vigorous self-criticism on the part of the community members; and, secondly, it can be an effective means of sustaining com-

³⁴ Malcolm S. Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education (New York: Association Press, 1970), p. 237.

munity interest, since it is the people themselves who must take responsibility for assessing their efforts.

(G) The Role of the Public Library in Adult Education Activities

In the light of what has been discussed, concerning the significance of adult education in the community development process, and in view of the fact that within small rural communities, the opportunities for organized adult education are often limited, a third recommendation regarding the role of the public library is submitted:

Suggestion III. The public library in a small rural community should provide, as one of its primary services, opportunities for community members to participate in informal, organized education activities; it should assist the community in the diagnosis, planning and evaluation functions in the community development process. Where other agencies primarily responsible for adult education already exist, the public library should assume a leadership role in encouraging and motivating its community members to participate in the programs provided.

The central idea expressed in this recommendation is one of the stated objectives of the modern public library; however, few rural libraries are equipped to accomplish this task. What is being suggested here is an

ideal towards which the small public library in rural communities should be working.

The public library will have to assume various roles in meeting the adult educational needs of its community. An indication of the likely functions may be seen in the American experience,³⁵ which provides three categories, presented as examples of possible routes for the participation of the public library in adult education:

Its unique role covering adult education functions for which the library is obviously designed:

1. The selection, arrangement, and administration of educational materials and information resources.
2. Responsibility for stimulating - through exhibits, individual reader guidance,³⁶ and group programs - the educational use of ideas in materials.

Its common role, covering functions which librarians as community adult educators, share with other adult educators in the common development of the total community adult education program:

1. Librarian's participation in community

³⁵ Margaret Monroe, "The Public Library's Role in Community Adult Education," in Muriel Fuller, The Michigan Library Community Project: A Library Adult Education Project, 1955-60 (Lansing: State Library, 1960), pp. 81-85.

³⁶ In this thesis; see Selected Bibliography of Readers' Advisory Services for trends in this aspect of modern public librarianship.

adult education planning through cooperation with other agencies in order to identify problems, organize community study groups, make available resources of these institutions for study and research, serve as contact with community for leadership and participant recruitment.

2. Sharing in the training of lay citizens for the community tasks; in group leadership, propaganda analysis, techniques of use of materials in problem solution.

Its overlapping role, covering services and programs offered in the public library which have their counterparts on different levels and from diverse points of view in the programs of schools, recreation agencies, etc.

1. Stimulation of the community to awareness of common problems and cultural opportunities through library sponsored lectures, forums, discussion series, music programs, art showings.
2. Serving as a clearing house of information on adult education resources in the community. (In most communities without an adult education council, this will not be an overlapping function).
3. Provide leadership training for library programs as other organizations provide training for their own programs.³⁷

Public library programs should be related to the particular needs of the community; it follows, therefore, that since communities are not alike, not all the functions outlined will necessarily be applicable. They should, therefore, be

³⁷ Ibid.

seen primarily as models subject to modification as the particular situation dictates.

H. Community Decision-Making

a) Community Participation in Decision-Making

The fourth and final element of the community development process to be discussed in relation to the role of the public library concerns the involvement of members of the rural community in decision-making, a process "by which a community chooses a plan or idea that affects the community and puts this idea into action."³⁸

Despite the lip service paid to the idea of increased community decision-making, in actuality, it has not always been put into effect in the developing nor the developed countries. Although government leaders may generally appear to accept the principle, they have not always made provisions for its implementation.

It is an element of the basic philosophy of community development to encourage a wider sector of the community to take a more active role in deciding upon actions and policies which may affect their way of life. This philosophy has been formed on the basis of a demo-

³⁸ Everett Rogers and Rabel Burdge, Social Change in Rural Societies, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1972), p. 290.

cratic ideal which affirms the right of the individual to make those decisions which affect his own welfare and that of the community. In addition, there are specific advantages in encouraging widespread community participation in decision-making. Among these advantages are the following:

1. Through participation in the decision-making process, individual members learn that others in the community are also willing to go along with the decision. Participation is thus a means of revealing group consensus. If the individual member knows of group support for the decision, he is more likely to be satisfied with it himself.
2. The decision to accept or reject is likely to be more appropriate to the needs of community members if they take part in reaching such a decision. In most cases, we expect individuals to know their needs more accurately than their leaders.³⁹

I) The Role of the Public Library in the Promotion of Community Decision-Making

On the basis of research studies on community decision-making in rural areas, a number of models have been formulated to describe the different stages in the process. One of these models⁴⁰ will be used as the basis for discussion of the role of the public library in com-

³⁹ Ibid., p. 276.

⁴⁰ See Rogers and Burdge, Social Change in Rural Societies, pp. 273-8 for discussion of the formulation and analysis of his model.

munity decision-making. The five stages of the model - Stimulation, Initiation, Legitimation, Decision, and Action - will be discussed briefly and some ideas regarding the role of public libraries will be presented.

(i) Stimulation: This is the initial stage of the process, at which "an idea or problem is judged to be important enough to merit community action."⁴¹ Generally, some individual or group recognizes the significance of the idea of problem in the community, and assumes the role of stimulator by bringing about community awareness of it. This stimulation may be effected in a number of ways, from meeting with a few people to discuss the phenomenon, to holding a large public meeting. What is essential, however, is the need to stimulate the community into taking some initiative. One way in which the library may assume a leadership role in this process, is by offering those resources, both physical and human, which can assist the community in making decisions concerning the idea or problem. Another way, which would perhaps be of more significance in the small rural community, is by assuming the "watchman" function we have discussed earlier. In this role, the library would have the responsibility of continuously surveying the community to report the changes taking place, and to assist the community in interpreting these changes.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 273.

(ii) Initiation: The second stage "involves a search for alternative means to solve a community problem, a narrowing of the possible alternatives, and consideration of the consequences of these alternatives."⁴² Once it has been decided that the problem demands some kind of action on the part of the community, the principal task becomes that of a search for, and exchange of, ideas to assist the community in deciding upon the best course of action. The success of this stage will largely depend on the pertinence of the information made available and the effective communication of ideas. In this, also, the public library can perform a leadership function in collecting, organizing and making available the needed information. In addition, it will have the responsibility of encouraging community members to seek other sources of information, whether these exist within the community or in other communities. With regard to the communication tasks, the library should be prepared to marshal its resources so that any alternatives suggested may be communicated to all those involved in this stage of the process.

(iii) Legitimation: At this stage of the decision-making process, "certain key power holders in the community give their approval or sanction to the proposed solution of the

⁴²Ibid., p. 275.

community problem."⁴³ In many community development programs, there has been a general tendency to overlook this stage. The result has been that many community efforts have been stifled mainly because members of the community power structure feel threatened; the possibility that the action decided upon may mean loss of power to such members, leads them to take action to dampen community enthusiasm. The problem, however, may be merely a lack of communication between community leaders and members of the power-structure. The library can play an important role, at this point, in establishing channels of communication between the people and the community power structure. For example, the library may organize a meeting, inviting representatives of both groups to discuss any misgivings they have about the community actions decided upon.

(iv) Decision to Act: Included in this stage is the "public selection of a plan for the solution of the group problem and the means to accomplish this goal."⁴⁴ Essentially, this process involves public consensus on the procedures and methods selected for attaining the desired objectives. A number of means through which public opinion and consensus may be attained have been suggested: petitions, surveys, referendums, public hearings or meet-

⁴³Ibid., p. 276.

⁴⁴Ibid.

ings.⁴⁵ The public library in the small rural community may assist in this process in a variety of ways. (1) It may assume leadership, or assist in carrying out surveys; (2) it may perform the publicity function by providing information about public hearings or meetings; (3) it may make available its facilities for meetings and discussion groups; and (4) it may seek to influence public opinion by providing specific information concerning the decision to act.

(v) Action: This is the longest stage in the process; it usually spans a number of years and it is at the completion of this stage that an evaluation of the complete decision-making process should be carried out.⁴⁶ Because of the long period of time involved at this stage, efforts must be made to sustain community interest and enthusiasm. The public library can make a further contribution at this point, by (1) providing the community with periodical reports of its progress; (2) by keeping the community informed of similar work accomplished in other communities; and (3) by publicizing the activities during this period. It may also become involved in the evaluation process by providing assistance in the collection, dissemination and interpretation of data, or it may assist in the training of local people to perform

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 275.

these functions. Where specialists and technical help are required, it can assist in making these available.

Summary

It was the purpose of this chapter to focus attention on four of the major elements in the community development process - information, communication, adult education, and community decision-making - and to discuss them in relation to the public library in the small rural community. The significance of these four elements was outlined, and it was contended that, in view of the fact that opportunities for providing them to rural communities were often non-existent or limited, the public library should assume leadership in making them available. Accordingly, a number of suggestions were submitted, regarding the public library as a vehicle for the delivery of knowledge, ideas, concepts and skills, all of which are essential to human growth and development. In the next chapter, a conception of the public library as a delivery system will be examined, and suggestions for its implementation will be presented.

CHAPTER IV

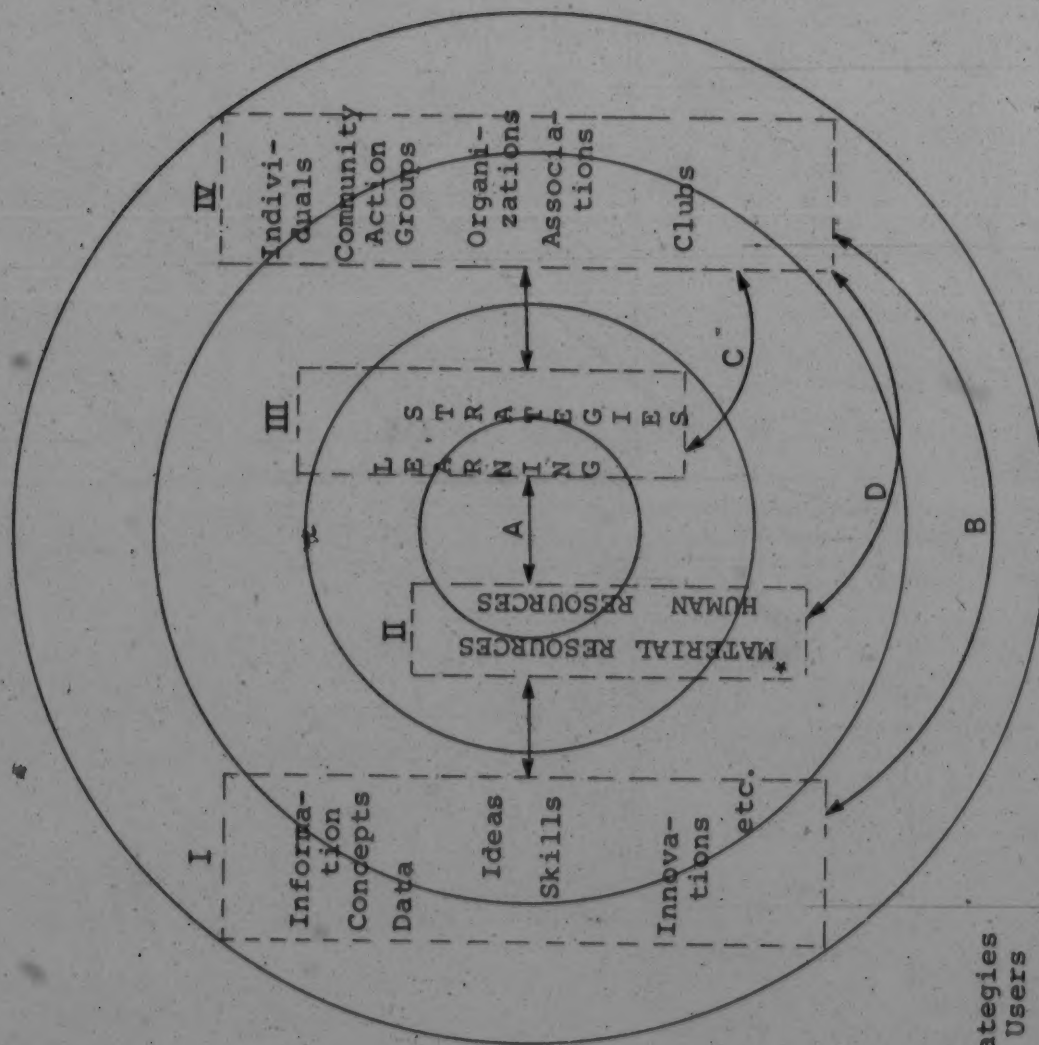
THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AS COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE

To develop further the central idea of this thesis - that is, the potential role of the public library in the small rural community - a schema¹ is presented in this chapter, illustrating (1) possible ways of facilitating learning for community development and for individual growth, and (2) other ways in which the individual and/or community groups may put these learning opportunities to use.

A. Available Learning Opportunities in Community Development

In the total learning environment (Figure 1), which community development seeks to promote in the small rural community, there are three major factors which contribute to the learning process. The first is knowledge, which may be information, data, concepts, ideas, skills, innovations (Column 1). The second is the vehicles of knowledge: the material and human resources, physical

¹The schema and chart provided in this chapter are the result of discussions with Harry E. Newsom, Professor of Library Science at the University of Alberta. These discussions, which took place during 1973, dealt with information, communication and learning strategies.



- I = Knowledge
- II = Resources
- III = Learning Strategies
- IV = Consumers or Users

* Magazines
Pamphlets
Films
Recordings
Videotapes
Books
Maps, etc.

FIGURE I. COMMUNITY USE OF AVAILABLE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

plant, and other facilities through which knowledge may be transmitted (Column 2). The third is the strategies and methods of learning which assist the learner in analyzing and synthesizing knowledge. These strategies may be those of adult education; for example, discussion groups, demonstrations and similar techniques intended to assist the learner in understanding processes of learning and the transmission of knowledge (Column 3). The consumers of knowledge (represented in Column 4) may be individuals, community groups, organizations or associations, who are participants, or potential participants, in the learning process.

The alternatives provided may be utilized in a number of ways. To achieve his learning objectives, the learner may opt for (1) a combination of the three alternatives: knowledge, resources, and learning strategies (Arrow A). Consider, for example, the learner who needs additional knowledge on ways to improve family nutrition. Access to this knowledge may be through some form of media - print or audio-visual; in addition, he participates in a discussion group with a home-economist as a resource person, and attends a demonstration of how to increase the nutritional value of a particular meal. Such a learner would have used the total combination of available alternatives. On the other hand, the learner may choose to utilize only one of the available options. He may make use of the know-

ledge only (Arrow B), or of the learning strategies only (Arrow C), or of the material and human resources only (Arrow D) - media, a specialist, the physical plant and other facilities available for meeting his learning needs.

B. The Public Library as Facilitator of the Learning Process

The options available to the learner have been outlined. It is now necessary to discuss possible ways in which the public library can assume institutional leadership as facilitator of the learning process in community development. In this chapter will be examined a conception of the public library as a primary vehicle for providing the learning opportunities necessary for community development.

The basic idea for the model to be discussed has not been conceived in a vacuum. Variations of this model have been implemented in the United States as, for example, the demonstration centres in three Indian communities established in 1971, to meet information and learning needs of these Indian communities.² Other examples are the social education centres in India and the information and learning centres in Canada. These vary from the model to be presented in organization and structure. However, the basic

²University of Minnesota, "Summary of the National Indian Education Library Project Report," ERIC Reports, June, 1972, pp. 1-46.

principles and concepts from which the model is derived are the same for the examples given.

a) Rationale for the Choice of the Public Library

There are several agencies involved, to varying degrees, in providing learning opportunities in rural communities - agricultural, health, education, recreation. A review of the literature dealing with these agencies³ indicates the extent to which they can serve the broad, comprehensive goals of community development; considered are the specific purposes of these agencies, the kinds of processes they use, and the particular clientele needs which they are established to meet. For example, an agricultural extension agency is established in a rural community primarily to serve the particular needs of farmers, although it may become involved in other community activity. Such an agency uses mainly demonstration methods for the purpose of increasing agricultural productivity. Consequently, the learning opportunities which it makes available to the rural

³See David E. Lindstrom, Rural Social Change (Illinois: Stipes, 1960); and Charles P. Loomis and J. Allan Beagle, Rural Sociology, The Strategy of Change (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1957), for analysis of agencies involved in facilitating change in North American rural communities. For studies on developing countries, see Richard Poston, Democracy Speaks Many Tongues (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); and D. Brokensha and P. Hodge, Community Development: An Interpretation (San Francisco: Chandler Publishers, 1969).

community are primarily agricultural. As another example, the school in the rural community seeks to meet the educational needs of young people from the ages of six to sixteen. It employs the traditional methods of teaching and provides educational opportunities of a formal nature. In general, therefore, whatever learning opportunities these agencies provide other than those that were established specifically to supply, may be considered to be incidental. The community development process demands of its learning facilitators the ability to adapt to changing requirements, to meet the varied needs of all segments of the community, and to be able to serve different purposes at the same time. It follows, therefore, that this must be a major criterion in deciding upon the choice of an agency as the primary vehicle for delivering learning opportunities: whether the agency has the "built-in" flexibility to be able to respond to the varied demands that will be made upon it. As will be shown, it is precisely these factors that form the basis of the choice of the public library: the flexibility inherent in its organizational structure in general; its ability to meet particular individual or group needs; the various purposes it can serve at any particular time; and its potential for making available innovative strategies.

(i) Major Purposes Served: An outline of the objectives of public library programs and services in the

United States provides an indication of the wide range of purposes libraries may be called upon to serve. In her report on a survey of public library activities, Helen Smith found that public libraries of all types were called upon to provide information and facts, recreational and social and social activity; to stimulate use and understanding of audio-visual materials, books and printed materials; to present resource persons and specialists; to train individuals for group leadership and participation; and to participate in community planning.⁴

As can be seen from the above, the public library may be called upon to perform any number of functions in the community development process. As the central source of information in the community, it would have potential for stimulating and mobilizing the community towards various forms of social action. While providing opportunities for educational, cultural, recreational and civic activities, it may supplement the efforts of the school or other agencies in the community. When there is need to promote coordination and cooperation between community agencies, the public library may assume a responsibility for this. For example, in community development, there is a tendency for agencies to work at cross-purposes. Thus,

⁴ Helen Lyman Smith, Adult Education Activities in Public Libraries (Chicago: American Library Association, 1954), pp. 42-44.

there is a constant need for systematization and integration of the various efforts of each agency. Problems arise in cases where agencies compete with one another for a larger share of tax revenues or public attention and support. It is in this regard that the public library may play a crucial role, since it has the enviable advantage of performing a coordinating function without posing a threat to any other agency in the community. As Greene points out, the public library is a "local institution" and, therefore, "impinges to no great extent on state or federal politics... it has no counter-lobbies, (and) few, if any, natural enemies."⁵

Another major advantage of the public library is the fact that it is generally an institution developed and promoted locally. As such, the library in a small rural community is not faced with the suspicion and hostility that confronts outside agencies attempting to become established in the community. All this places the public library in a favourable position, from which it may exercise leadership in voluntary cooperative efforts among the various government agencies and associations in the community. It may exercise this leadership by inviting representatives of each agency to meet periodically, to discuss and

⁵Morris Greene, "The Library in the Great Game of Politics," Wilson Library Bulletin, XXXVIII (March, 1964), pp. 538-40.

plan together, and to develop strategies which can assist in the integration and coordination of these efforts.

(ii) Major Processes: In this context, "process" refers to the learning strategies used, and the techniques for supplying material and human resources needed in the community development process. The nature and variety of services and programs provided by the public library give an indication of its potential for responding to varying community needs:

1. Reference service to meet information needs
2. Readers' advisory service
3. Radio and T.V. programs
4. Remedial reading programs
5. Film programs
6. Training courses in group leadership
7. Outreach programs
8. Library extension services
9. Vocational and technical classes
10. Special interest group programs
11. Informal adult education classes
12. Consultation services
13. Demonstration projects
14. Program planning services.

All these programs may be designed to serve such needs as information, education, civic responsibility, economic and social growth. They are essentially the means through which public communication, and the communication process, in general, may be facilitated. Mainly because of variety

and flexibility of the programs and strategies utilized, the public library has a unique feature which makes it especially suited to the role of facilitator of the learning process. Together with the various opportunities it provides for effective communication, it has the ability of reversing the pattern of mass communication, changing it from one which transforms the receivers of messages into an impersonal mass audience, to one which links "the single reader or listener or seeker to myriad sources of information, ideas, and inspirations among which he can choose."⁶

(iii) Organizational Structure: Examining the organizational structure of an agency is another means of determining whether an agency has the necessary flexibility to meet the constantly changing demands of a community. A number of questions may be raised; for example: how rigid is its hierarchical structure? does it allow for decision and policy-making at the lower levels? how much decentralization does the structure allow? and are local involvement and "grass roots" participation encouraged?

The organizational design of public libraries varies according to their respective size and the kinds of

⁶Dan Lacy, "Social Change and the Library: 1945-1980," in Douglas Knight and Shepley Nourse, eds., Libraries at Large: Tradition, Innovation and the National Interest (New York: Bowker Co., 1969), p. 14.

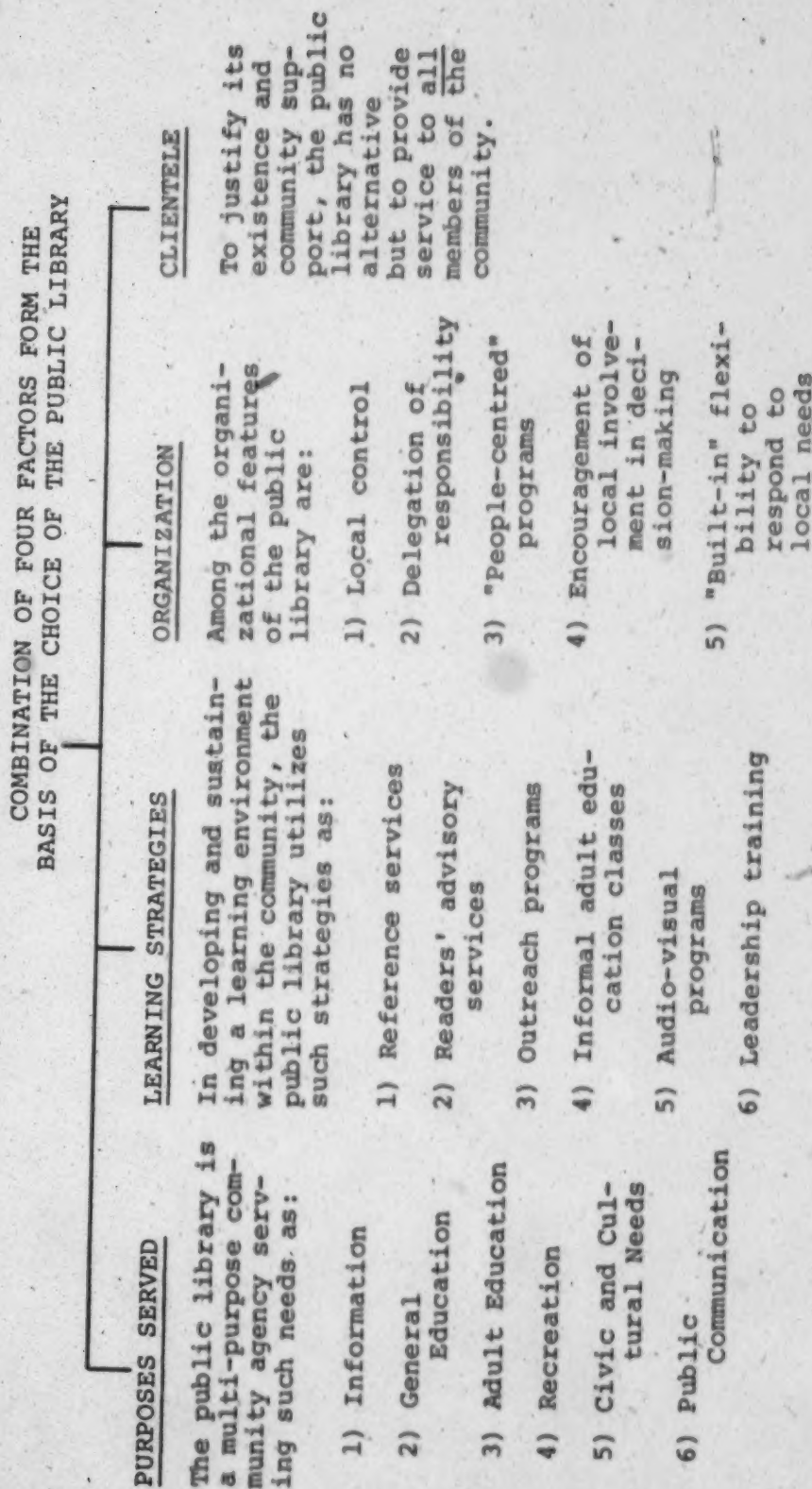
services provided. In general, however, they are designed to provide ultimate control of and responsibility for policy and decision-making at the local level. For example, the organization of a small library may be set up in the following manner: at the top, the library board; on the second level, the librarian, who is directly responsible to the board; and finally, on the third level, the remainder of staff, who is responsible to the librarian. Because of this simple organizational structure, the chances of over-bureaucratization, with its rigid controls, are limited. In addition, through the appointment of local members to the board, it might be possible to ensure greater involvement of local members in decision-making.

(iv) Clientele Served: More important, perhaps, than its organizational structure, is the concept of the modern public library which emphasizes the use of programming geared towards the needs of individuals, rather than towards some pre-determined goals that may have been set by a particular funding agency. In other words, the raison d'etre of the public library is to serve its clientele, and as such, it is imperative that its programs be planned according to the needs of the local community and the individual. Moreover, the encouragement of local participation in decision-making, and the fact that public libraries are, in general, truly local institutions, are factors which aid

in reducing significantly the alienation which usually exists between the community and government agencies. Another important feature of the public library, which places it foremost among other agencies and institutions involved in the community development process, is the fact that, unlike most other agencies, the services it provides are not geared to any one particular clientele. Public libraries are established to serve the needs of all the individuals of the community - the young and the old, white-collar worker and blue-collar worker; the farmer and the housewife. To justify its existence in the community, and to gain community support, the public library must be equipped to serve a variety of community and individual needs.

The ability of the public library to encourage local involvement and participation in the planning and execution of learning programs: its ability to provide alternatives in processes of communication; the general nature of its services; the training of librarians with the necessary skills for leadership in community-action programs; it is the combination of all these features and the four major factors outlined, which place the public library in a position to assume leadership in the community development process.

FIGURE 2. A RATIONALE FOR THE CHOICE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AS FACILITATOR OF THE LEARNING PROCESS IN THE SMALL RURAL COMMUNITY



Suggestion 4. The public library in the small rural community should extend its roles and functions to assume leadership in providing the learning opportunities necessary for meeting the learning objectives in the community development process.

In Chapter III, a number of suggestions were made regarding the role of the public library as the small rural community information and communication centre, and as an agency for providing leadership in adult education activities and facilitating community decision-making. The result of the combination of these responsibilities is the conception of the public library as the small rural Community Resource Centre.

The writer's conception of this model is based on the principles of the modern public library as outlined in Chapter I; and the model is intended to reflect such trends in public library service as are presented in Chapter II. In addition, in the discussion regarding its implementation, the need for flexibility in the resource centre will be stressed: that is, flexibility in terms of organizational structure, learning techniques and the utilization of resources.

C. The Public Library as a Community Resource Centre -
Recommendations and Suggestions

a) Organization and Administration

With regard to the organizational structure of the small public library in the rural community, professional librarians have been recommending the establishment of regional public library systems. Three types of regional systems have been developed, namely, a federated regional system, a unified regional system, and a system loosely tied to a regional resource centre. In these systems, there is a regional library headquarters or resource centre responsible for the processing and organization of the materials, the development of programs, and the coordination of services. The local libraries are the service outlets. Experience has shown that a major drawback of such a system can be the partial loss of local autonomy. A federated regional system can provide for the centralization of resources while, at the same time, local autonomy is preserved to a larger degree. If properly structured, a regional or area resource centre, supported by a state or provincial government, can also offer similar services to a loosely linked group of independent libraries. The small library needs to be backed by the more complete material and human resources of the larger system, whichever type it may be.

In the small rural community, the financial support for libraries, which comes mainly from local taxes, is too small to provide the material and human resources necessary for adequate public library service. This is one of the many factors which make the formation of a regional system most desirable; for, with a regional system comprised of some six communities, the local revenue base is increased, and the state or provincial government may more appropriately be called upon to provide financial support.

In light of the above, it is recommended that the proposed community resource centre be established as an autonomous unit in a federated regional system. Where this is not possible, arrangements should be made for supporting services, and specialized services from an area resource centre. As a member of a federated regional system, the community resource centre would contract with the regional headquarters for services such as advanced reference, cataloguing and processing of materials, joint sharing of media and audio-visual equipment, access to the media specialist and other resource personnel, inter-library loans. In addition to these contracted services, arrangements should be made whereby the regional library headquarters could have access to resources in larger centres, such as a provincial or national library. Simi-

larly, efforts should be made to ensure access to the resources of other educational institutions in the region, such as a community college or a university. Essentially, a library in a small community must be able to draw on larger libraries and other educational institutions for personnel, specific materials and services.

The design of an organizational and administrative structure for any community resource centre will, of course, be determined by social, economic and political factors within the community. The recommendations and suggestions presented, therefore, are intended as a general framework for the establishment of resource centres, subject to modifications according to the dictates of the particular community.

b) Local Government

Local government, in the suggested organizational chart, would have ultimate control of the community resource centre. The exercise of control would be mainly through provision of tax revenues, the main source of financial support for the centre. It is suggested, however, that the responsibility for major policy-making be delegated to the Community Action Board (CAB).

c) Community Action Board

It is suggested that this policy-making body

be comprised of seven to fifteen members, a board large enough to be representative of all segments of the community, and not small enough to be self-perpetuating. Its membership should include representatives of government and private agencies, voluntary organizations, of youth groups, of women's groups, and of senior citizens' groups. For the sake of continuity, the government representatives should be appointed to serve on the board for a minimum of two years; all the representatives may serve for two years or less. This rotation would guard against the self-perpetuation of an elite group.

The Community Action Board would assume responsibility for overall policy-making. It would present an annual budget to local government authorities; hire the community coordinator, appoint sub-committees, and delegate authority to him. The Community Action Board would also have the responsibility of maintaining a liaison with the regional headquarters or area resource centre, and with other communities that might be members of the regional system. Other responsibilities might be:

1. to provide representation on the Board of Directors of the regional system;
2. to approach state and national government for financial support;
3. to act as the liaison group between the community and other educational institu-

tions in the region;

4. to report periodically on the work of the community centre;
5. to perform a public relations function within the local community.

Centre Coordinator. This individual, a community development worker with library training, or a librarian with special training in community development, should be appointed by the Community Action Board, and would act as the General Manager. In other words, he would be responsible for the administration of the centre, and its relations with the community.

Since the processing, cataloguing and other technical work would be done at the regional headquarters, the centre coordinator would have more time to work in the community. The following are suggested responsibilities of the Centre coordinator:

- 1) to provide leadership in the planning, evaluation, and coordination of activities in the Centre and in the community;
- 2) to inform the community of available resources, and provide access to them;
- 3) to recruit and train voluntary workers;
- 4) to organize community-action and study groups;
- 5) to initiate discussion of community issues;

- 6) to provide consultation to individuals and community groups;
- 7) to act as liaison individual between the local community and the regional headquarters;
- 8) to encourage voluntary coordination between the various community agencies;
- 9) to submit annual statements and financial estimates of the centre to the Community Action Board;
- 10) to participate in the planning and execution of adult education activities with other community agencies.

e) Sections

It is suggested that five main sections be established, each one being responsible for a particular activity. As before, the activities suggested in the model are merely examples, and would depend on community needs. One division or section would provide adult education opportunities to individuals and community groups. Media and information services would be provided in another section. A third section would be responsible for the recruitment and training of voluntary workers. Recreational and cultural activities would be provided in a fourth division; and a fifth division would be responsible for planning, coordination and evaluation of the activities of the Centre and the community. It is also

suggested that these divisions be staffed by trained voluntary workers, with the regional headquarters providing resource persons and specialists when these are required.

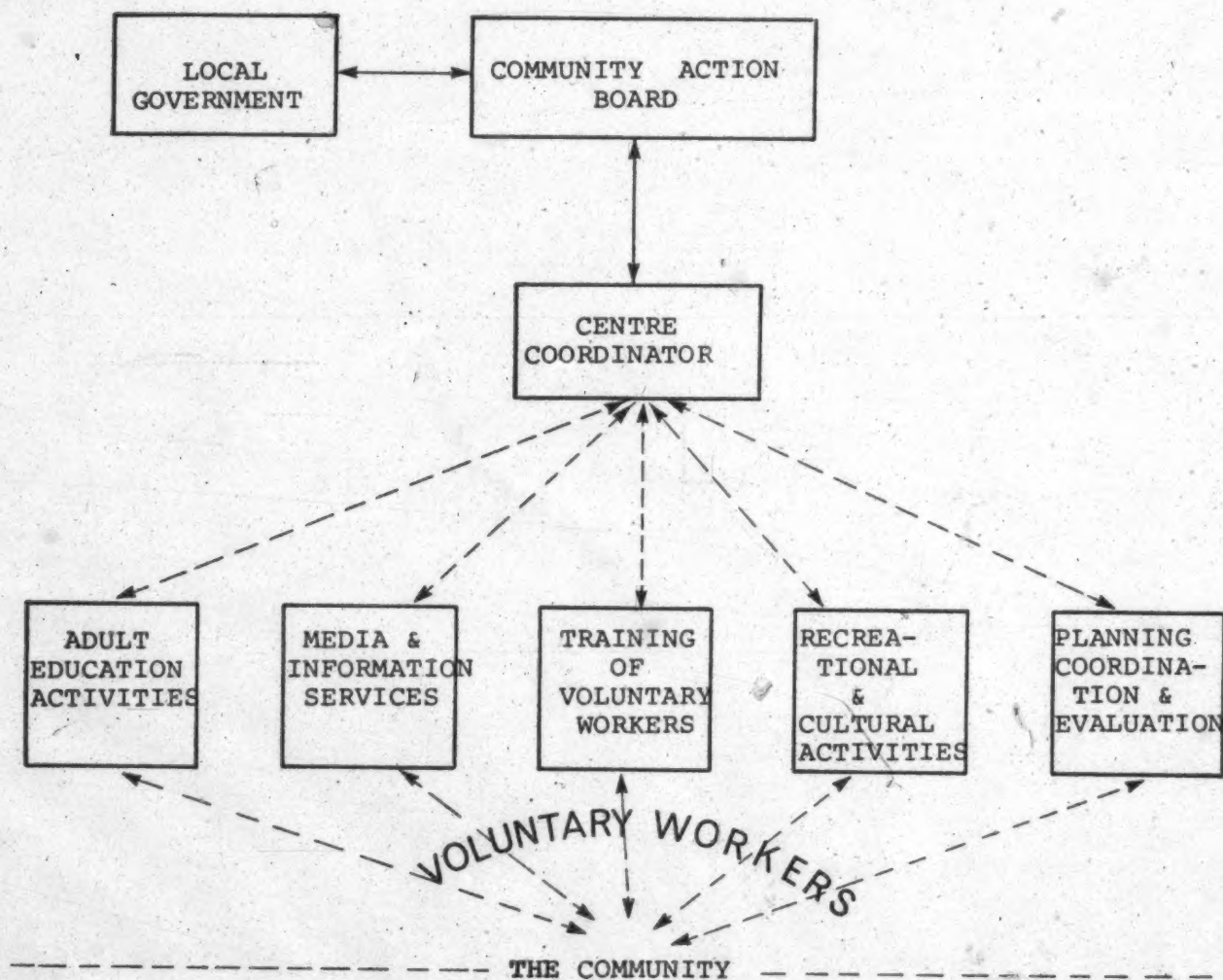
f) Voluntary Workers

It is important that potential voluntary leaders - such as youth group leaders, members of women's groups and senior citizens' groups - be recruited and trained to perform general administrative duties in the Centre. One important reason for this, is that the centre, in this way, can be a practical training ground for community development leaders. Therefore, as more of these volunteers are recruited and trained, they should be delegated the responsibility of working in the community. Their primary role, in such cases, would be that of community animateurs, initiating and stimulating organized community action.

g) Budgeting

It is recognized that most countries have already enacted legislation allowing local government the jurisdictions to expend funds for libraries and community centres. In most countries, the development of library services for the general public has been almost entirely a responsibility of the local government; however, other levels of government are becoming increasingly involved

FIGURE 3. A SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION CHART FOR THE
COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE



with media services. This is owing to the fact that the educational and cultural implications of such services concern so many aspects of society.

Media services for the general public in a community are not costly when compared to general educational services, water, sewage and garbage disposal, roads or spectator recreation. Good library service, including the cost of buildings, is being provided in North America for an annual five to ten dollars per capita. Costs vary greatly from one district to another, depending on the funding for quarters, the state of development and services provided.⁷ The expenditure per family for media services of quality is only the cost of one dinner per year for the family at a medium-priced restaurant. The annual contribution from local taxes for the support of the community resource centre should be approximately six to eight dollars per capita.

It is important that direct annual costs to the taxpayer be kept to a minimum, if such a program is to be accepted and maintained by the community. Government grants for the operation of library services, grants for buildings, special grants for innovative practice, all

⁷American Library Association, Interim Standards for Small Public Libraries (Chicago: A.L.A., 1962); see also Canadian Library Association, Public Library Standards (Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, 1967).

these should be sought. Indeed, generally in small communities, service clubs, businesses and individuals will contribute in the initial stages of the development of the service, for quarters, equipment, furnishings, and even basic materials. Such valuable involvement should be actively sought and encouraged, because media services require a great deal of involvement by individuals and community groups.

As a guide to determining the proportion of the total annual budget to be spent on the various operating units of the Resource Centre, the following suggestions are presented:

Salaries. Since the most important aspect in community development and media services is the recruitment and training of high calibre personnel, ordinarily fifty percent of the budget is needed for salaries of workers at different levels. In a small community with a population of about 2500 to 3000 it is suggested that at least 50 percent of annual tax revenues for public libraries be allotted to salaries.

The remaining 50 percent should be allotted in order of the importance of the operating units. Thus, 25 percent should be allotted to materials - multi media - the second most important aspect of the service. 10 percent should go towards the cost of maintenance, and an-

other 10 percent towards contracts with the regional headquarters. The remaining 5 percent should be budgeted for miscellaneous items.

h) Material Resources

The following is a list of some of the multimedia resources that should be made available by the resource centre:

Newspapers	Films
Magazines	Filmstrips
Pamphlets	Records
Books	Cassette tapes
Documents	Radio receivers
Charts	Phonographs
Maps	Television
Graphs	Film projectors

i) Human Resources

Resource persons and technical specialists should be made available when needed, but it is neither necessary nor realistic to suggest that they be employed on a full time basis by the resource centre. These should be provided on a contract basis by the regional headquarters.

Resource persons may be:

- 1) Individuals with special skills in group processes, group participation and leadership training

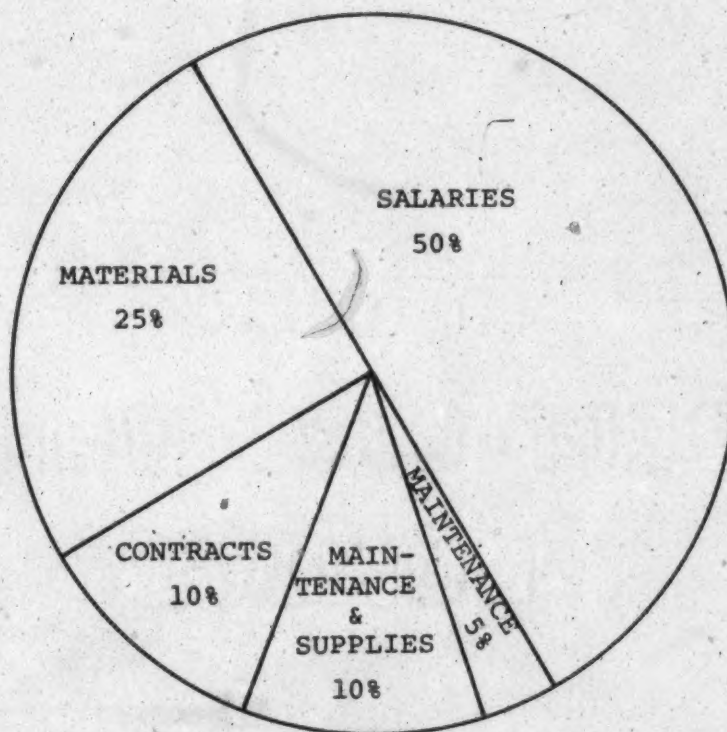


FIGURE 4. DIAGRAM TO SHOW RELATIVE PROPORTIONS OF
BUDGET FOR THE OPERATION OF A COMMUNITY
RESOURCE CENTRE

- 2) Readers' advisory specialists
- 3) Media specialists
- 4) Trained community development workers.

In addition to the material and human resources provided through the required library headquarters, the physical facilities of the Community Resource Centre should also be made available for group meetings and other learning activities. Local community members with special skills should be sought out as additional human resources. The Resource Centre should provide the necessary expertise to assist the community in the local production of its own material resources; for example, a specialist in video tape or film to assist the community in local productions of some aspect of community life such as the history of the community.

j) Learning Strategies

The learning strategies to be provided by the Community Resource Centre should be determined according to the needs and interests of individuals and the community. Many of these will be conventional strategies, such as lectures, demonstrations, discussion groups. It is suggested, however, that innovative strategies be constantly developed and evaluated. For example, a community group should be trained in the use of the more complex audio-

visual equipment, and in the technical skills necessary for the production of media resources required in community programs. Such a production may be the recording and editing of interviews with ordinary citizens on a topic of local interest. Regardless of the strategies and programs decided upon, it is important that the Community Resource Centre make available a variety of learning strategies and programs. Some of the learning strategies that should be developed are:

- (1) Workshops
- (2) Exhibitions and displays
- (3) Study-action groups
- (4) Radio forums and talk shows
- (5) Community surveys
- (6) Contests
- (7) Literacy classes
- (8) Story-telling sessions
- (9) Discussion groups and teach-ins
- (10) Drama and singing groups.

It should be the overall strategy of the Community Resource Centre to stimulate and maintain a learning environment, by encouraging community use of the resources available. It should assist individuals in becoming more informed about the various methods by which knowledge may be transmitted; about how information is organized; and how to obtain such information when they need it. Accord-

ingly, the centre coordinator and staff should perform a number of key functions to meet the overall objective of the centre. They may function as adult "learners'" advisors.⁸ The following suggestions, as to how the functions of the adult "learners'" advisor may be accomplished, might be worth considering:

- 1) a day in each month could be set aside in order for volunteers to carry out door-to-door canvassing to recruit new users of the Centre;
- 2) newsletters could be sent out to non-users, informing them of the various ways in which the Centre may be of assistance;
- 3) special orientation programs for newcomers and transients in the community should be organized;
- 4) the staff should establish and maintain close liaison with leaders of community groups, and seek commitment from them to encourage their members to make use of the Centre;
- 5) staff and volunteers should take every opportunity to appear on radio and television programs to promote the idea of the Centre;
- 6) the centre coordinator and staff should make

⁸In library literature, the word used for "learners" is "readers." (See Selected bibliography of the literature in this area of public libraries, at the end of this study.) It is necessary, however, to emphasize the use of multi-media (combination of print and audio-visual), rather than print media alone, which the word "reader" implies.

themselves available to community groups to discuss the learning opportunities available at the Centre;

- 7) a week in each year should be set aside for the display of local community talent;
- 8) volunteer workers of all age groups should be recruited and should be involved in the planning and execution of programs.

The agency that implements any one or all of these suggestions is, indeed, making an effort to respond to the needs and interests of the individual and of the community.

k) Implications

It must be stated here that, with regards to the implementation of the Community Resource Centre, there are certain limitations and possible implications to be taken into account. Consider, for example, a town of about 5000 people; the model would probably not be applicable in a community of this size, for several reasons:

- 1) There may already be other existing local agencies, such as a community or recreation centre, performing similar functions.

- 2) In a community of this size, there is likely to be a formal government structure with departments or branches; for example, the Agricultural Extension Agency or the Department of Tourism. These may already be providing some of the services that the Community Resource Centre would provide. Thus, there is the possibility of

conflict and opposition to establishing a Community Resource Centre, particularly in cases where these agencies have to compete for financial and other public support.

3) Within a community of this size, the organizational and social structure is likely to be more complex. This complexity can pose a problem, especially when attempts are being made to solicit the cooperation and overall community consensus necessary in the promotion and operation of the Community Resource Centre.

4) Closely related to the above, is the fact that in a larger community, there is a greater possibility of the presence of pressure groups and/or interest groups. Such pressure groups may, for varied reasons, oppose the establishment of such a Centre in the community. For example, one group may see the community resource centre as minimizing its importance or influence in the community.

It is essentially for the above reasons that the model proposed in this thesis has been restricted to the small rural community of about 3,500. The very size of the communities discussed throughout this thesis allows for the possible implementation of the model, because it is the relative simplicity in organizational and social structure which minimizes the likelihood of the obstacles discussed with regard to the larger community.

Summary

In this chapter, a schema was presented, suggesting the various ways in which individuals and community groups

may avail themselves of learning opportunities in the community. It was suggested that the public library, as the Community Resource Centre, has a unique role to play as facilitator of the learning process in community development. To fulfill this role, flexibility has to be the key characteristic of the agency, with regard to the organizational and administrative structure, processes and strategies used, and overall purpose. A model for the Community Resource Centre was developed, based on trends and principles of community development and the public library. The model was then explained in terms of its possible application in the small rural community.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this study, the writer has been examining a possible solution to one of the most acute problems presently facing rural communities in general; that is, how the various levels of government and community leaders can effectively involve rural communities in development efforts. It was noted that, one way in which attempts have been made to realize this goal, has been through the community development process - an approach which seeks to bring about planned systematic change through the cooperative efforts of government and the rural people themselves.

The process involved in this approach is essentially educational and motivational. It, therefore, demands the creation and maintenance of a learning environment, to facilitate desired change in knowledge, skills and attitudes, which is favourable both to individual growth and community development. It was shown that equally important is the need for effective channels through which knowledge about change and community de-

velopment can be transmitted in small rural communities.

On examination of the major elements of the community development process, it was noted that the community agency or institution assuming a leadership role in this process must meet certain basic requirements. These are: flexibility in organizational and administrative structure, in its major purposes served, in its methods of work and major processes. In addition, it should be equipped to meet the information, communication and adult education needs of the community it serves, and provide community members with opportunities for effective decision-making. Moreover, the community agency which seeks to bring about change through the community development process should be able to respond to the changing needs and aspirations of the people it serves.

On the basis of these criteria, an examination of the development of the public library, and in view of the present library trends in the United States and other countries, it was contended that the public library, probably more than any other existing institution, has the potential for assuming the role of agency of change in the small rural community.

Chapter II of this thesis presented a historical overview of the development of the public library in

Britain, the United States and Canada; the major factors which affected public library development in these countries were outlined. Some of the factors which assisted the development were: government legislation providing financial support for libraries; innovations, such as the development of county and regional systems; the efforts of the various professional library associations in each country; and support of philanthropists such as Carnegie. There were also factors which slowed the progress of the library in these countries. These were the decrease in financial support during World War II, and the years of the Depression in Britain and the United States. The overall situation, however, was one of marked library development in these countries. Examination of the major forces of change indicated the various social needs to which the public library has responded throughout its development.

In Chapter III, the role of the public library, in relation to the major elements of the community development process, were examined. It was suggested that the public library could assume a leadership role in community development as facilitator of the communication and decision-making process, and as the primary agency for meeting the information and adult education needs of the small rural community. A model of the library as Community Re-

source Centre, was examined and suggestions regarding its implementation were presented in Chapter IV. Among the suggestions were: (1) that the public library should be autonomous in a regional system and that efforts should be made to ensure broad community representation at the major policy-making level; (2) that, as far as possible, responsibility for decision-making and the planning of programs should be delegated to lower levels of the organization. It was also suggested that the local community be encouraged to participate in the planning and execution of the programs.

It was the purpose of this thesis to examine major elements in the community development process, and to explore possible ways in which the public library in the small rural community can and should commit its resources to facilitate this process. These elements were examined, possibilities for the library as the Community Resource Centre were explored, and suggestions regarding roles and functions of the Centre were presented. It was asserted that the concept of the public library as the Resource Centre in the small rural community could be implemented. Suggestions were outlined concerning organizational and administrative structure, methods of work, financing and budgeting, and roles of key workers.

The writer has made no attempt to examine in de-

tail such factors as administrative behavior, and the training necessary for the Centre coordinator and the voluntary workers. These are beyond the scope of this thesis as is the problem of coordination among agencies involved in community development in the rural community. They are presented here for future research. In addition to these problems for future study, it is suggested that the model of the public library as Community Resource Centre be implemented as a pilot project in order to test its feasibility.

The outlook for the implementation of the Centre is encouraging, if the recent experiments in many parts of the world are an indication. Such experiments have taken the form of learning centres, social education centres, information, and community centres, in countries such as India, Canada and the United States. The public library has played a central role in the demonstration centres in India. Yet, the concept of a "total delivery system" as outlined in this thesis, with the public library as the primary vehicle, has not completely materialized.

The success of the model will depend essentially on the personnel and, particularly, the Centre Coordinator. He must have proven competence as a multi-media librarian and administrator. He must have community development skills, the ability to communicate effectively, to listen,

to offer ideas, to persuade, and perhaps most important, he must have a keen desire to work in rural communities. In accepting this challenge, the librarian will have departed appreciably from his traditional role as custodian of books. The indications are that the institutions educating the new librarian are preparing young people to meet this challenge. Indeed, one North American librarian has made the following observation:

*We are running into more and more librarians who seem to have based their future plans on finding a chance to grow and develop in the smaller communities of the United States. Maybe the slogan for the 1970's is really: 'Head for the small towns, young librarian, that is where it may be.'*¹

¹"An Interview with Kenneth Dowlin" (County Public Library, Wyoming), American Libraries, IV, No. 2 (February, 1973), 19.

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